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IN THE EARLY ROMAN
EMPIRE

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL IN
CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR
OF PHILOSOPHY

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CHAPTER VI

JUDAISM

Missionary Motives in the Old Testament and Their Gradual Development

The religion of the Old Testament was not always a missionary religion. The Mosaic religion was tribal or national to the core. The God of Sinai became the God of Israel exclusively, and Israel only was His people. The Mosaic picture of God was the prince of a tribe or a people. Israel stood in covenant-relationship to God. Yahweh did not stand in such relation to any other nation or people. Other nations had their national gods which were tolerated within their own dominions. Israel only asked that Yahweh unequivocally should be recognized as the supreme God and King over Israel.

At the time of the early kings two significant religious ideas emerged which ought, it seems, to have stimulated to proselyte-propaganda. These ideas were: the thought of Yahweh as the creator of the universe, and the thought of mankind as having an inner relationship and organic unity. If Yahweh was the creator of the world, and if he had created all men of the same blood, then it would seem logical that he should be recognized and confessed as Lord in the world which belonged to him. If the world had come into being by a creative act of Yahweh, then no other gods could possibly have any claims to worship beside him. This conclusion, however logical it may seem, was never drawn.

Creation for the Yahwist was only the first step in the sacred history by which Yahweh chose Israel to be his own people. Creation came also to be considered as evidence of the Creator's glory, greatness, and wisdom. This creative act of God achieved religious importance for Israel by deepening and strengthening its relationship to Him. It never led to any active proselyte propaganda.

The unity of the human race, being created by the same

God, served in ancient times, as background for Israel's election. The purpose of the creation story in Genesis was to show how Israel, step by step, separated itself from the rest of mankind and came to occupy the place of Yahweh's chosen people. In the so-called "Patriarchal Blessing" we have a vague suggestion of Israel's future significance for the Gentile world. But the idea of Israel going out in the world, converting the nations to a belief in Yahweh, this thought remained entirely foreign to Israel during the period of the Kings. Something had to happen in Israel before it was willing to leave the position of isolation and become a missionary to the nations. What was it? How did it come about? It was a gradual development.

- (A) Israel arrived at an universal idea of God. Yahweh came to be conceived of as the only God, and the only Lord over the whole human race;
- (B) Israel woke up to the fact that it had in its law and religion a unique and inestimable value which the other nations of the world were lacking;
- (C) Israel came to know the Gentile world, during the Exile, as it had never known it before. They learned of the degradation and the hopeless position of the Gentiles, but also of their capacity for repentance and regeneration;
- (D) Israel became convinced that it was called by Yahweh to be his messengers among the nations. God had placed his people in the midst of the Gentiles for a purpose.

Let us examine these missionary motives a little closer:

(1) The Monotheistic-universal conception of God. The Hebrews had to travel a long and tortuous road before they arrived at a place where they saw, that the Creator of the universe was also the ruler of the world and the God of every human being.

In the earliest time of Israel as a nation, Yahweh was the God of Israel only, and his dominion was confined exclusively to Canaan. David was still of the opinion that to be exiled from the land of Israel of necessity meant that he would have to serve other gods. "For they have driven me out this day from the abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, 'Go serve other gods.'"¹ When Naaman wanted to worship Yahweh in his homeland, Syria, he asked for "two mules' burden of earth" in order to be able to worship Yahweh in Damascus upon his own soil.² Jephthah, a judge in Israel, knew that Chemosh had given to the Ammonites the land they

¹I Sam. 26:19.

²II Kings 5:17.

possessed, just as Yahweh had given to the Hebrews the land they possessed.³ In ancient times in Israel, the tendency was toward monolatry with tolerance of other religions, but with complete isolation from them. Balaam sees in Israel a people that "dwell alone."⁴ It took Israel a long time before it became fully cognizant of the fact that Yahweh was the God and the Ruler over the whole world and over all people.

It was chiefly the great prophets in Israel that opened the eyes of the people and enlarged their horizon. For Amos, Yahweh is already the God of the whole world, the great Governor over every people. "Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor? and the Syrians from Kir?"⁵

Yahweh is the ethical God and rules according to ethical laws. He punishes the nations for their crimes, even crimes against one another, entirely separate from their attitude to Israel.⁶ From this starting point the development continues. Yahweh becomes "a God afar off."⁷

Deutero-Isaiah, the great prophet of the Exile, has rightly been styled "the first conscious monotheist in Israel."⁸ For him gods, in plural, do not exist in other form than idols of wood and metal. Yahweh is the only God. There exists no other besides Him, worthy the name. In the Sibylline books, which are partly Jewish propaganda-literature, it is stated: "There is only one single God, who alone is the Ruler of the world. Him you shall worship. He is the only existing Ruler of the world Flee away from the unrighteous idol worship. Worship the Living God."⁹

Theoretical monotheism, in abstract form, hardly sufficed as a missionary motive. It became productive first after it had been supplemented by the thought that Yahweh stood in a positive relation to the nations of the world. He had claims upon them, and they had certain obligations to him. Yahweh had it in his power to do with the Gentiles as he pleased. He could use them

³Judges 11:24.

⁴Num. 23:9.

⁵Amos 2:1.

⁶Amos 2:1.

⁷Jer. 23:23.

⁸Joh. Lindblom, "Gammaltestamentliga Missionsmotiv," Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1937), p. 206.

⁹Sibyl. Or. 111. 763.

as his tools, to accomplish his will, and he had a right to demand their worship and service. In the eschatological passages of the prophet-literature, the thought is often expressed that the nations of the world would come to Zion and worship the God of Israel.

Many people shall go and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of God from Jerusalem."¹⁰

In another prophecy of Isaiah, we are told that Assyrians and Egyptians are to turn to the Lord and become associated with Israel as the people of the Lord.¹¹ In the so-called "Apocalypse of Isaiah" it is said, that Yahweh is to make a feast for all people, and that he will destroy the covering cast over all people.¹²

At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; and all the nations shall be gathered into it, to the name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil heart.¹³

The Gentiles are to confess their sins and come from the ends of the earth and say: "Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit."¹⁴ "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord."¹⁵

These passages, which we have quoted, do not speak of any proselyte-propaganda. There is no direct exhortation to Israel to do propaganda work and convert the nations. The expectation seems to have been that the Gentiles would come of their own accord in seeing all the wonders which the Lord performed in behalf of his people Israel.

That Yahweh is also the God of the Gentiles finds expression in Deutero-Isaiah. "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear."¹⁶

It would, indeed, be difficult to find any passage in the Old Testament, where it is said that Yahweh "loves" the Gentiles.

¹⁰ Isa. 2:3.

¹¹ Isa. 19:22-25.

¹² Isa. 25:6-8.

¹³ Jer. 3:17.

¹⁴ Jer. 16:19; Cf. Zeph. 2:11; Hab. 2:14; Hag. 2:8; Zec. 2:11; 8:22 f; 14:9, 16.

¹⁵ Ps. 22:27.

¹⁶ Isa. 45:23.

Love in the Old Testament is the love of God for his chosen people. When a particular passage in the Old Testament speaks of God as "loving the stranger,"¹⁷ it refers to Yahweh's care for the guest or alien, in giving him food and raiment. This alien had for some time lived among the Israelites and participated with them in their cult.

Dr. Kaufman Kohler, the eminent Rabbi, has this to say in regard to the "stranger":

The fact is, however, that the word "stranger" is a mistranslation of the Hebrew Ger, which denotes a guest or an alien under the protection of the law of the land. This protection was afforded to him, in Semitic circles, as soon as he had entered the tent of the Sheik of the clan, and in Aryan circles, as he approached some family hearth, which brought him into relation with the tutelary deity of the clan; but at the same time he also assumed a certain obligation toward that deity. Accordingly, the Jewish Ger was enjoined to observe certain laws in common with the Israelites. Thus he was especially bound not to violate the Sabbath by doing work on that day, nor to provoke God's anger by idolatrous practice or blasphemy, and, according to the Priest's Code, to avoid eating blood and contracting incestuous marriages. These are the conditions of his admission into the category of a political Ger, or protected alien. In order to become a full citizen, however, he had to undergo the rite of circumcision. With the transformation of the Israelitish state into a religious community after the Exile, the Ger became a Proselyte, that is one who has come over, in abandoning his heathen belief, and, according as he accepted certain parts of the Mosaic law or the entire law, he was regarded either as a mere Ger Toshab, a sojourner, or a full-fledged member of the Jewish community, called Ger Zedek, a proselyte of righteousness, that is, an adopted citizen of the city of Righteousness, as Jerusalem was called. The real meaning is "One who has come under the protection of the holy city," in the same sense as the Rabbis term it, "One who has come under the wings of Shekinah."¹⁸

The reason why God spared Nineveh was "pity" (ohus), which was also extended to the cattle.¹⁹ In one exceptional passage, Jeremiah speaks of the compassion (richam) of Yahweh towards the evil neighbors of Israel that "touch the inheritance which I caused my people Israel to inherit."²⁰ Compassion here is quite different in fervor from the "love" Yahweh has for his chosen people. It really amounts to this, that Yahweh, after

¹⁷Deut. 10:18.

¹⁸Kaufmann Kohler, The Origin of the Synagogue and the Church (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1929), pp. 158, 159.

¹⁹Jonah 4:10-11.

²⁰Jer. 12:15.

having punished them and "plucked them up from off their land," will have pity on them and let them return to their native soil.

(2) Israel's consciousness of the unique value of its own religion. Quite early the Israelites began to reflect upon the precious inheritance they had in their religion and in their law. The J. document in Genesis was aware that the descendants of Abraham were in possession of a treasure which other nations had a desire to obtain. Isaiah exclaims: "For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, not perceived by the ear, neither has the eye seen a God who acts toward His people as Jehovah does toward His people."²¹ Israel's God alone has power to foretell what is going to happen and bring it to completion.²² For Jews in late Inter-Testamental times, it had become a dogma that Israel alone was in possession of the true religion. All the others were lies and deceptions. Israel alone among the nations did not worship idols made with hands. As Israel became conscious of being a Torah-religion, Torah came to be considered as their greatest divine gift, and Torah became a special object of praise. Israel is admonished to keep the Torah,

for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great who has God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is? And what nation is there so great that has statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law?"²³

Deutero-Isaiah uses only logical reasoning when it says: "The isles shall wait for His law."²⁴

Israel was in possession of "wisdom" personified. Wisdom and Torah became later identified. In this sublime idea, that Torah contained the quintessence of all wisdom, lay imbedded a very strong missionary motive. The wisdom-teacher, conscious of this fact, lets the wisdom itself speak: "Come to me, you who are desirous of me, and be satisfied with my gifts. To think of me is sweeter than honey and to possess me is better than purest honey."²⁵

Jerusalem and Zion were for the Jews a precious possession. Jerusalem was to them the "City of the Lord of Hosts," and Zion

²¹ Isa. 64:4.

²² Isa. 41:21; 43:9; 44:7.

²³ Deut. 4:6-8.

²⁴ Isa. 42:4.

²⁵ Sir. 24:9.

was "the joy of the whole earth."²⁶ "All nations shall flow unto it," eager to receive instruction in the ways of the Lord.²⁷ Jerusalem and Zion are to be the center of the world, during the Messianic Kingdom.

(3) Israel's knowledge of the actual condition of the Gentile world. In spite of a lofty monotheism and a consciousness of the supremacy of their own religion over all others, no proselyte-propaganda was initiated until Israel was removed from its own land and forced to reside in a Gentile and alien land. It was during this period that the Hebrews came to know the Gentiles, the ins and outs, as they had never known them before. The importance of the Babylonian Exile, for the religion of Israel, can hardly be overestimated, and its significance for the entire world is scarcely any less. There the Hebrews learned to know paganism in all its concreteness from the inside. The first discovery they made was the hollowness and destitution of polytheism and idolatry. A new literature, the so-called idol-persiflage, came into vogue, in which idolatry is treated with satire and irony. Deutero-Isaiah is here the trail-blazer. He describes how the carpenter selects a piece of wood and makes his plans and his drawings.

He burneth part thereof in fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied; yea, he warmeth himself and saith, "Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire;" and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image; he falleth down unto it and worshippeth, and prayeth unto it, and saith, "Deliver me; for thou art my God."²⁸

In the Apocryphal Daniel, the dragon is made to break in two by Daniel. At another time, Daniel outwitted the priests of Bel by proving that it was they, and not the god, who devoured the victuals sacrificed to the idol.

It was not only idolatry that came in for sarcasm. The moral depravation in the Gentile world got its share, too. Ecclesiasticus describes the depravity in the Gentile world in such a way that one is reminded of Paul's description in Romans.²⁹ But through intercourse with the Gentile world, they also came to know that repentance from sin and conversion to the true God was possible for the Gentiles. In spite of the degradation and the low estate of the Gentile world, it had not been possible completely

²⁶Ps. 48:2, 8.

²⁷Isa. 2:2, 3.

²⁸Isa. 44:12-17.

²⁹Ecc1. 14; Rom. 1:18-32.

to efface the image of God in man. The capacity of turning to God and of repentance was still with him. This afforded a point of contact with the Gentiles in the effort to convert them to Yahweh. The eschatological hope in Israel affords another evidence of the growing faith, relative to the possibility of the conversion of Gentiles.

Isaiah was not expressing a romantic idea only when he wrote: "The isles shall wait for me, and on my arm shall they trust."³⁰ Deep down in the consciousness of the Gentile world there was a longing for a more satisfactory religion than they had. Deeply rooted in the subconsciousness of Israel was this idea that the Gentiles some day should turn to the Lord of Heaven. In the wisdom literature, the idea is expressed that wisdom was a common possession of the human race.

What was then to be demanded of Gentiles turning to the God of Israel? The Inter-Testamental writers hold forth the view that the very least that should be demanded from them was that they should keep the Noachian commandments.³¹ It is very probable that Isaiah had the Noachian commandments in view when he wrote: "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant."³² These commandments were given to mankind long before the covenant with Abraham and the law of Moses, and were looked upon as binding for the whole human race.

During the Exile, the Jews came into contact with the Persian monotheism of Ahura Mazda. Here was something similar to their own belief. This could not possibly fail to impress a race so impressionable and so intelligent as the Jewish. Cyrus is described not only as the instrument of releasing Israel from captivity, but as the representative of Yahweh himself, even as a worshipper of Yahweh. "He is my Shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure."³³ He is Yahweh's anointed, "whose right hand I have holden."³⁴ He is said to be loved by the Lord.³⁵ In the royal edict, releasing the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, he acknowledges that the Lord, God of Heaven, has given him all the

³⁰ Isa. 51:5.

³¹ Gen. 9:1-7.

³² Isa. 24:5.

³³ Isa. 44:28.

³⁴ Isa. 45:1.

³⁵ Isa. 48:14.

kingdoms of the earth.³⁶

In the book of Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar and King Darius are both confessors of Yahweh, of his majesty and power. The Gentile sailors, in the book of Jonah, cried unto Yahweh, beseeching him.³⁷ The belief in the possibility of the conversion of the Gentiles found an affirmation in the great number of proselytes, both in Palestine and in the Diaspora, who joined with the Jews in worshipping Yahweh. The proselytes and the half-proselytes (the God-fearers) play an important part in the Old Testament, and in the Rabbinical writings they are often referred to. It is the increasing number of proselytes coming in that makes the prophet cry out in the name of the Lord: "Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people."³⁸ The great prophet of the Exile looks ahead to the time when "one shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord and surname himself by the name of Israel."³⁹

The book of Jonah and the story of Ruth are told with the aim in view of imparting a more friendly and optimistic view in regard to the Gentiles. Jonah is sent to the capital of Israel's archenemy, the Assyrians, and to the representatives of the grossest idolatry. He is sent to Nineveh not on a missionary errand, but as a preacher of impending judgment. But the result of this preaching was quite otherwise than Jonah had expected. The king with his people repented in sackcloth and ashes and cried "mightily unto God."⁴⁰ And Yahweh took pity on them and saved the city. There could no longer be any doubt. Gentiles of the worst type had already repented, and Yahweh had accepted their repentance and answered their prayer.

(4) Israel became conscious of a divine call to make Yahweh known in the world, to proclaim his name among the Gentiles. God himself, or God in history, had taught the Hebrews this lesson. It was during the Babylonian Exile that it became clear to them that their God must have had a purpose in permitting his chosen people to be exiled among the nations. Yahweh wanted them to be his messengers among the Gentiles. It was the great prophet of the Exile who this time, too, interpreted and formulated

³⁶ Isa. 48:14.

³⁷ Jonah 1:14.

³⁸ Isa. 56:7.

³⁹ Isa. 44:5.

⁴⁰ Jonah 3:5-10.

Israel's obligation: "You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant, whom I have chosen."⁴¹

In another place, Isaiah formulates Israel's missionary calling in this way:

For an everlasting covenant will I make with you, the covenant of love, which I faithfully promised to David. As once I made him a witness to peoples as leader and commander of peoples, so you shall call nations you know not. And nations that know you not shall run for you. For the sake of the Lord, your God, the Holy one of Israel.⁴²

As David of old was called to be a witness to the nations of Yahweh and his power, so Israel as a nation is now called and chosen!

We cannot here discuss the problem of "the Servant of the Lord," in Deutero-Isaiah. Interpretations oscillate between an individual and the exiled Israel. Whichever interpretation we adopt, it is clear that the "Servant of the Lord" is to do active missionary service for the Lord among the nations. "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen, in whom My soul delighteth: I have put My Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles."⁴³ "It is too light a thing, that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."⁴⁴

It was in the darkest hour of its national history that Israel became conscious of its divine calling to spread the knowledge of God and his Torah among the nations. Formerly they had believed that the conversion of the Gentiles would take place without any help of theirs, but now they saw clearly that they were called to cooperate with God and be his messengers in order to bring it about. The certainty of this calling constituted the great gain acquired by the Hebrews in the Exile. Their suffering and humiliation took on a new aspect, if God had a purpose with it all.

Passages in the Old Testament in regard to Israel's consciousness of their missionary obligation are not many. They appear chiefly in Deutero-Isaiah, and in the Psalms, and are of com-

⁴¹ Isa. 43:10, 12; 44:8.

⁴² Isa. 55:3-5 (The American Translation).

⁴³ Isa. 42:1.

⁴⁴ Isa. 49:6.

paratively late date. In poetic language the Psalmist gives expression to his desire to proclaim the name of the Lord to the Gentiles. He exhorts others to make him known, and his words are a direct appeal to the Gentiles to repent and worship the true God.⁴⁵ The prophet of God looks forward to the day when Yahweh shall gather all nations and tongues to Jerusalem.

They shall come and see My glory, and through them will I set up a sign. Such of them as escape will I send to the nations, to Tarshish, Put, and Lydia, to Meshech and Rosh, to Tubal and Javan, the distant coasts and to the isles afar off, that have not heard My fame, neither have seen My glory, and they shall declare My glory among the nations.⁴⁶

Evidently those who are to be sent to the nations are thought of as proselytes from the nations gathered at Jerusalem.

No one of these Old Testament missionary motives, which we have discussed, was strong enough by itself and alone to break down the wall of isolation and explode preconceived ideas. But in that very moment, when they all united their forces, the active proselyte-propaganda sprang up like a flame from the fuel. The "chosen people"⁴⁷ had been chosen for a special task, to be God's messengers to the nations, and they set out to accomplish it.

The Dispersion of the Jews and the Extent of Their Proselyte-Propaganda

While the religion of the Jewish people had its origin in most ancient times, the name Judaism comes from a rather late

⁴⁵Ps. 9:12; 18:50; 22:26 f.; 67; 72:11; 96:3,10.

⁴⁶Isa. 66:18, 19.

⁴⁷"In the designation, 'Am Segula,' the Chosen People, the accent is on 'people' not on 'chosen.' It is not the chosen people, but the chosen people. The negation that lies in the epithet 'chosen' is not directed against other peoples, but rather towards the priests. This designation signifies that the priests are excluded from every privilege and high position in regard to the rest of humanity. Israel differs from the rest of mankind only in this, that it first recognized and sought to realize in practical living its relationship to God. Israel, therefore, without further ceremonies accepted the calling to be the teacher of humanity with regard to the recognition of the Eternal Father of which every human being carries in his breast an image." J. Goldschmidt, Das Judentum in der Religions-geschichte der Menschheit (Frankfurt A. M.: J. Kauffman, 1907), p. 64. What Goldschmidt has to say in reference to the "Chosen People" is very ingenious, but hardly convincing.

period. It appears first in II Maccabees,⁴⁸ a Greek work of the end of the second century B. C., and it bears the mark of having been coined in antithesis to the term Hellenism. The sharp contrast between Hellenism and Judaism became painfully evident to the Jews. We are told that "a man could neither keep the Sabbath, nor celebrate the feasts of the fathers, nor so much as confess himself to be a Jew."⁴⁹ The term *Ἰουδαῖος* may well have been coined originally by the Gentiles as a mark of contempt. But later the term lost every shade of reproach and became even a title of honor.⁵⁰ The term "Jehudi" at first denoted a member of the tribe of Judah, but subsequent to the fall of the Northern Kingdom, it came to designate a member of any Israelite tribe. According to the book of Esther, which was probably written in Maccabean times, Mordecai, the Benjamite, is spoken of as a "Jew."⁵¹ Judaism thus came to denote the religion of the Jewish people, their beliefs, ideals, laws, and customs. This is eminently so during the period of Jewish history with which we are chiefly concerned.

It is not necessary here to go into detail as to the history of the "chosen people": their conquest of Canaan and making it their national home, their struggle against unfriendly tribes and neighbors and against an ever-present polytheism. Great men arose amongst the Jews, men who have written their names indelibly in the history of mankind: Moses, the lawgiver and the religious genius; David and Solomon, great kings, God-fearing and wise; prophets like Samuel, Elijah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, men who saw visions and who were able to interpret them, men and women who experienced God in such a way that they could proclaim "thus saith the Lord." Wise men, religious men, men with spiritual insight wrote their sacred literature, consisting of law, history, wisdom literature, prophecy and praise. No other nation has produced such a literature.

The Palestinian history of Israel is full of storm and stress. The conquest of the land as a home for the Israelites was a bitter one, and the religious conquest was even more in-

⁴⁸ II Macc. 2:21; 8:1; 14:38.

⁴⁹ II Macc. 6:7.

⁵⁰ Joseph Barber Lightfoot, St. Paul Epistle to the Galatians (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1890), passim.

⁵¹ Esther 2:5 and other places.

tense. There was the old and popular religion with its strong appeal over against the religion of Yahweh. There was, at times, a draw between the political leaders of the nation and the great religious leaders, between the priests and the prophets, between those who preached reform and religious conquest and those who preferred status quo. There were strong divisive elements, too, within the nation, and finally at the demise of the great king Solomon, the United kingdom fell apart into two kingdoms. Instead of strengthening one another, the two kingdoms grew further and further apart, politically and religiously. In 722, the Northern Kingdom fell before the onslaught of Assyria, and its people were carried away as captives to Assyria. The Southern Kingdom, being less exposed than the Northern to the covetous designs of the then world-powers, and pursuing a wiser foreign policy and being religiously more united and stronger, survived as an independent nation for another one hundred thirty-six years. But being situated between the great world powers of Egypt and Babylonia, and undecided what way to turn, the kingdom of Judah fell in 586 B. C., and part of its people were sent into exile to Babylon.

Now begins a time of suffering and national humiliation. But the national spirit could not be crushed, and the religious spirit soared to heights unknown before. A great prophet, the "great unknown," arose in Babylon. For convenience's sake, he is labelled Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah; but in spite of that, he remains the "great unknown." It was he that solved the mystery and interpreted the riddle of Israel's suffering. It was all for a divine purpose. Israel was to be Yahweh's messenger and witness among the nations. This entailed deprivation, misunderstanding, and prolonged suffering. Israel was to be servant of Yahweh. In Babylon, it was revealed why Israel was the "chosen people," chosen to be a channel of blessing to other people. Chosen not to lord it over the nations, but to be the servant of the Lord to the nations. She was not to be the servant of other nations, but the servant of the Eternal God, the Most High.

This was the beginning of Diaspora, and it has not ended yet. True, the Babylonian Exile came to an end, and the exiles were allowed to return to their homeland again. But only a few availed themselves of this opportunity. The majority of the Jews have ever since been in exile, away from the land of their fathers. Even during the glorious restoration, under the Maccabean dynasty,

the majority of their compatriots were outside the kingdom, in Babylonia, Persia, Syria, and Egypt. Their suffering has not come to an end yet and neither has their service. Their service to mankind has been little understood and never fully appreciated.

Their service was to be to the nations, and to the nations they had to go. Since Diaspora was to be the place of service, there seems to have come upon this homeless race an irresistible urge to go to every place where civilized man can go. How did it come about that the shores of the Mediterranean were simply littered with Jewish colonies? It was due to numerous causes, and those in part obscure. All we can hope to do is to point out the most outstanding ones, and to observe, where this is possible, how this Jewish migration, forced or voluntary, reacted upon the proselyte-propaganda in Judaism.

As far back as the prophet Jeremiah, there was formed a diaspora in Egypt.⁵² After the destruction of Jerusalem, a great number of Jews migrated voluntarily into Egypt, under the leadership of Johanan ben Kareah, and they forced Jeremiah and Baruch to go with them.⁵³ These immigrants seem to have turned to idol worship at once, burning incense to and worshipping the gods of Egypt. When Jeremiah remonstrated with them in order to make them see their evil ways, they firmly avowed their decision "to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem."⁵⁴ Instead of doing propaganda among the Gentiles for the God of Israel, they turned to idol worship themselves.

During the Persian overlordship of Egypt, many Jewish soldiers were garrisoned at Elephantine, also called Jeb, near Assuan, or Syene. A number of papyrus inscriptions in Demotic, Aramaic, and Greek have been excavated. One of the documents is a marriage contract. Other documents deal with official correspondence with Bagoas at Jerusalem and with Sinuballit at Samaria, asking them for help. The Jews had been permitted to erect a Yahweh temple at Elephantine. The feeling between the Jewish colony and the Egyptians was tense; and then one day the Jewish temple was de-

⁵²Jer. 24:8.

⁵³Jer. 42, 43.

⁵⁴Jer. 44:17.

stroyed by Egyptian troops. The Jews at Elephantine carried on an active proselyte-propaganda. Some of the names from Elephantine are Egyptian names and may have been proselytes. There are over three hundred Jewish names on the papyrus. Some of these had fathers or grandfathers with Egyptian names. Nibtachja, a Jewish woman, married for the second time. This time with an Egyptian, Ashor, son of Zacho, a servant in the king's palace. He became a proselyte to Judaism, and they had a son whom they called Nathan. The last document is dated 400 B. C.⁵⁵ During the conquests of Alexander, many Jews were transplanted to Syria and Egypt. When Ptolemy I evacuated Syria, many of the Jews voluntarily followed him to his kingdom.⁵⁶ It is also related that Ptolemy took 30,000 Jews with him to Egypt in order to garrison the frontiers. The community of Jews in Alexandria originated with Ptolemy Soter, 319 B. C. He also compelled Jews to settle in Cyrenaica.⁵⁷ Antiochus the Great, in 200 B. C., transferred Jews from Mesopotamia to his newly founded colonies in Phrygia and Lydia.⁵⁸ During the Maccabean wars (166-79 B. C.) against neighboring kingdoms: Syria, Arabia, Egypt, many Jewish soldiers were made prisoners and sold into slavery to Egypt and Asia Minor.⁵⁹ The son of the high priest Onias betook himself to Egypt and there set up a rival temple to that at Jerusalem, at Leontopolis, by Heliopolis, in the Eastern part of the Delta, during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, 164 B. C. This temple had no connection with the earlier one at Elephantine. The temple at Jerusalem had fallen into the hands of usurpers, and this one was built in protest.⁶⁰ The first Jewish community established across the Tiber at Rome was composed of captives that Pompey had brought back from Jerusalem, 63 B. C. Isolated captive Jews may have found their way to Rome at a much earlier date.⁶¹

⁵⁵Edward Meyer, Der Papyrusfund von Elephantine (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche [Buchhandlung], 1912), *passim*.

⁵⁶Contra Apion 1.22; Josephus Ant. 12. 1.

⁵⁷Jos. C. Apion. 2, 4, 44. ⁵⁸Jos. Ant. 12. 3, 4.

⁵⁹Ch. Guignebert, Le Monde Juif vers le temps de Jesus (Paris: La Renaissance du livre, 1935), p. 275.

⁶⁰Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

⁶¹Isidore Singer, Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk and Wagnall Co., 1905), XI, 445.

The most diverse witnesses, such as Strabo, Philo, Seneca, the author of Acts, and Josephus all bear testimony to the fact that the Jewish people were disseminated over the whole civilized world. Acts gives us a vivid picture of the extension of the Diaspora:

Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven Parthians and Medes and Elamites and dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judaea and Cappadocia in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome both Jews and proselytes.⁶²

In the first century B. C. and to the first century A. D., the Jews were dispersed in every part of the Roman empire, around the Mediterranean and bordering the Euxine Sea, in Armenia, Syria, Babylonia, Media, Upper and Lower Egypt, Rome, Asia Minor, in the Occident, in Cyrenaica, et cetera. In the middle of the second century B. C. Oracula Sibyllina, addressing the "chosen people" could say: "Every land is full of thee and every sea."⁶³

But the Diaspora grew in ever-widening circles, far outside the Graeco-Roman world. And wherever the Jews went, they carried their faith with them, except in a few cases where they had already become idolaters at heart, like those who went to Egypt in the time of Jeremiah, and the calf-worshippers of the Northern kingdom, exiled to Assyria. They had no religion worth preserving and were soon lost to Israel. Concerning the two thousand Jewish families that Antiochus the Great settled in Phrygia and Lydia, Talmud says specifically that the Phrygian Jews had given up their religion and, therefore, broken off every communion with their brothers at Jerusalem. Since 70 A. D., when they were forbidden to pay tax to Jerusalem, they forgot their language and their religion and were absorbed into the Pagan cult of Sabazius, in case they were not won over to Christianity.⁶⁴ In the near East many Jews undoubtedly embraced Islam, either by force or by persuasion. But these are exceptions. The Jews have been remarkably loyal to the religion of their fathers, and especially did they attempt to spread their faith by proselyte-propaganda in the early Roman empire.

⁶²Acts 2:5, 9-11.

⁶³Sibyl. Or. 3:27; cf. I Macc. 15.

⁶⁴Hugo Gressmann, Die Orientalischen Religionen in Hellenistisch-Römischen Zeitalter (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1930), p. 117.

In Mesopotamia the Jews lived in closed settlements. We hear very little of any missionary propaganda here, but the Christian missionaries lamented the fact that they were opposed by Jewish propaganda.⁶⁵ From Babylonia the Jews carried their faith by migration to the Arabian Peninsula where they found a strong following. "It hung upon a hair, that the whole of Arabia fell to the Jews," says Renan.⁶⁶ In Southern Arabia there was founded a Jewish Himyarite Kingdom, governed by a dynasty converted to Judaism. This kingdom survived until it was swallowed up by the conquering Islam. From Persia the Jews migrated to India and found on the Coromandel Coast a friendly reception. To the Malabar Coast came Joseph Rabban with seventy families. By treaty right, he was given permission to build synagogues, to convert Hindus to Judaism, and he himself was permitted to ride in a kingly style on horse or elephant. The inclusion in the treaty of a paragraph, like that of converting Hindus to Judaism, is highly instructive as to the missionary zeal of the Jews. Slaves were acquired, and there was some intermingling with the natives. Many slaves were admitted into Judaism and received their freedom with this step. Thus the race known as the black Jews of Cochin came into existence.⁶⁷

Quite early the Jews penetrated to distant China. According to one tradition, the earliest settlements of Jews in China took place during the time of Antiochus the Great. They entered China from Bactria and Parthia about 200 B. C. According to a later tradition, they entered China during the Han dynasty, around 58-76 A. D. People of the early Roman Empire connected China with silk, which they were eager to get. It sold in Rome for an equal weight in gold. Phoenicians brought textiles from India and silk from China. Having the adventurous spirit, some Jews may have been tempted to brave the long and dangerous journey for a lucrative trade. They settled at Kaifengfu, Honan, which city for a period was capital of China. For several centuries their existence in China was entirely unknown to the outside world. Two Moslem

⁶⁵S. Bernfeld, Die Lehren des Judentums (Leipzig: Gustav Engel, 1929), 3 vols., p. 347.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 347.

⁶⁷Sidney Mendelssohn, The Jews of Asia (London: Kegan Paul, French, Trubner & Company, 1920), p. 102.

travellers through India and China (851 A. D.) relate, that "Jews had been settled in that empire from time immemorial" and that "many for the sake of riches and preferment have abjured their own religion."⁶⁸ Marco Polo, the Venetian traveller, refers to the powerful commercial and political influence of the Jews. This was in 1286. They had then synagogues at Kaifeng-fu and Hangchow.⁶⁹

In 1617 a Chinese Jew came to Father Ricci at Peking in order to find out if the white people, come from the West, had the same faith as he. Later on one of the Catholic missionaries visited Kaifeng-fu and their synagogue. On both sides of the pulpit were tablets. On one of them, written in golden letters, was the name of the emperor, on the other in Hebrew letters, the Shema. The Jews in China claimed to be the descendants of the tribe of Asher. They intermarried with the Chinese and seem to have done some proselytizing. But at the end of the nineteenth century, their group had dwindled to such an insignificance, that they could not keep their synagogue in repair, and they were compelled to dispose of it. After about two thousand years of history in China, the Jewish community is no more.⁷⁰ But one is still able to recognize some Jewish traits in otherwise perfectly Chinese faces in the streets and in the bazaars of Kaifeng-fu. Some of their descendants are to be found in Moslem or Christian communities, but it is to be feared that a large part lapsed into polytheism.⁷¹

Down in Africa, in Abyssinia, we have a Jewish-Abyssinian type of Jews. They are preponderantly black. When and why their forefathers settled in Abyssinia is mostly a matter of conjecture. The theory most acceptable to scholars is that the Jewish elements of the Falashas (emigrants) proceed from Himyarites captured in Ethiopia by King Kaleb, conqueror of Dhu-Nuwas. They took refuge in the mountains and converted a part of the Aagaas and through

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 136.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 139.

⁷⁰Albert Katz, Die Juden in China (Berlin: Verlag von A. Katz, 1900), pp. 12 ff.

⁷¹It is to be noticed that the Jewish race is still strongly represented in China. At the same time as the old colony at Kaifeng-fu dwindled to nothingness, other groups of Jews came by sea and settled in the open ports. In 1939 alone, some 25,000 Jews arrived in Shanghai as refugees from Europe.

intermixture with them, produced the Falasha type. The Falashas are in possession of the whole Jewish Bible, except the book of Esther, and many religious customs, e. g. the synagogue, but are ignorant of Purim or Chanucka. This seems to indicate that their conversion took place in the first century B. C. Their religion is pure Mosaism, but they know nothing about Mishnah or Talmud, or Hebrew. Circumcision is performed on the eighth day on both boys and girls. The operator is a woman. A first-born must marry a woman who is also a first-born.⁷²

It has been necessary to discuss the widespread dispersion of the Jews among the nations somewhat in detail because Jewish proselyte-propaganda, almost without exception, had its nerve center and its motivation in the Jewish community, in the Jewish worship, and in the Jewish synagogue. Wherever there was a group of ten male Jews, there they had Jewish worship, and generally a Jewish synagogue. Judaism was a highly ritualistic religion. Attitude and behaviour in religious worship counted so much with them. God was great and holy and just; man was insignificant, impure, and self-centered. Man needed to give expression in worship of his sense of humility, repentance and helplessness. This attitude toward the divine is occasionally found in polytheistic religions, too, but generally speaking it is totally absent. The solemnity and reverence and earnestness in their worship never failed to impress pagans, who witnessed it. Wherever there was a nucleus of Jewish worshippers, a synagogue, and a religious leader, there the proselyte-propaganda was at work.

The existence of a strong missionary movement among Jews during our period is corroborated by Jewish, pagan, and Christian writers. Philo writes: "The laws of Moses influence all nations, barbarian and Greeks, the inhabitants of continents and islands, the Eastern nations and the Western nations, Europe and Asia; in short, the whole habitable world from one extremity to the other."⁷³ Horace speaks of attending the Jewish synagogue as a natural thing.⁷⁴ Juvenal asks his friend, "In what synagogue may I find you?"⁷⁵ Josephus writes, "The multitude of mankind itself have

⁷²I. Singer, *Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York: Funk and Wagnall's Co., 1903), Article: "Falasha," V, 327.

⁷³Philo ii. 137 (Yonge's Translation).

⁷⁴Horace Sat.i. 9. 67-72.

⁷⁵Juvenal Sat. iii. 296.

had a great inclination of a long time to follow our religious observances; for there is not any city of the Grecians, nor any of the barbarians, nor any nation whatsoever, whither our custom of resting on the seventh day has not come, and by which our fasts and lighting up lamps, and many of our prohibitions as to our food, are not observed."⁷⁶ Seneca speaks of the widespread observations of the Jewish Sabbath; by this, he thinks, the conquered Jews have imposed their laws upon their Roman conquerors.⁷⁷ Juvenal speaks of the decadence of Roman customs and of "whole families embracing Judaism. The father does not work on the Sabbath and abstains from pork, the sons are taught to despise the Roman gods and will only worship the God of heaven, and they cap it all by letting themselves be circumcised."⁷⁸

There is also a corroboration of the missionary zeal of the Pharisees in the gospel according to Matthew: "You compass sea and land to make one proselyte."⁷⁹ Whether this passage has reference to a particular case,⁸⁰ or is a general statement, the fact still remains, and it is a significant testimony to the strenuous proselytizing activities and missionary interest within certain circles in Palestine. There can be little doubt that the zeal for proselyte-propaganda was far stronger in Diaspora than at the center of Judaism. But evidences show, that even within Palestinian circles, the missionary zeal was by no means wanting.

There is no direct evidence concerning the extent of proselytizing in pre-Maccabean times. But there were two forms of proselytizing, which always seemed natural and even inevitable to men in ancient times. The slave and the stranger, actually resident under the roof of the head of the household, however foreign in blood, were practically members of that household. It only required some appropriate ceremonies for them to be brought formally into it. So the first reference in the Old Testament to circumcision especially notes, that not merely Abraham but all his household, the slave born there and those bought with money

⁷⁶ Joshua Against Apion. ii. 40.

⁷⁷ Seneca De Civitate Dei. vi. 11.

⁷⁸ Juvenal Sat. xiv. 96-106. ⁷⁹ Matt. 23:15.

⁸⁰ Moriz Friedländer, Die Religiösen Bewegungen innerhalb des Judentums im Zeitalter Jesu (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1905), pp. 32-34; Willoughby C. Allen, "Matthew," Int. Crit. Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), p. 246.

were circumcised.⁸¹ We are told that Abraham had "three hundred and eighteen trained men, born in his house."⁸² Down through the centuries a constant, considerable accretion to the Jewish people must have taken place in this way.

But during the Maccabean times new and more aggressive missionary methods were employed. The Hasmonean dynasty settled once and for all the troublesome Idumean question by forcefully converting them to Judaism.⁸³ Aristobulus used the same method in converting the Itureans in Northern Galilee.⁸⁴ Instead of being an obscure Syrian tribe, the Hasmoneans made of Judea a powerful nation, one of the strongest in that part of the world. They were zealous for the God of their fathers. Had not the prophets spoken of the time when nations should flock to Zion to worship the true God? There can be no wrong in applying forceful methods when it is for their own temporal and eternal benefit. So these rulers reasoned, and they acted accordingly. What would have happened if the Hasmonean power had lasted for some centuries and continued to grow? Would they have continued the same proselytizing policy in regard to other neighboring people? It was a political expediency and as such it was a signal success.

The Gentiles actually joined the Jewish people in increasing numbers. The rise of the Jewish nation to political power acted as an incentive to some, the religious fervor of the Jews, and their worship ceremonies, and their gorgeous temple at Jerusalem stimulated others. Kings found it to their advantage to be on friendly terms with the Hasmoneans and the Jews, and even to accept their religious worship. The Chamberlain of Queen Candace in Ethiopia was perhaps a proselyte to Judaism.⁸⁵ The royal family of Adiabene accepted the Jewish faith and had it propagated in their Kingdom.⁸⁶ Drusilla, the sister of King Agrippa, married Azizus, the king of Emesa upon his consent to be circumcised, and Bernice, widow after Herod, king of Chalcis, married Polemo, king of Cilicia, after he had been circumcised.⁸⁷

⁸¹Gen. 17:23, 27.

⁸²Gen. 14:14.

⁸³Josephus Ant. xiii. 9.

⁸⁴Israel Goldberg, Outline of Jewish Knowledge (New York: Bureau of Jewish Education, 1931), p. 434.

⁸⁵Acts 8:26, ff.

⁸⁶Jos., Ant. xx. 2-4.

⁸⁷Jos. Ant. xx. 7.

At Rome, in noble Roman circles, there was a predilection for Judaism. Fulvia, wife of the Senator Saturninus, was converted to Judaism. Poppaea Sabina, the mistress and later the Queen of Nero, was a proselyte. Josephus calls her a religious (θεοσεβής) woman.⁸⁸ Suetonius and Cassius Dio agree in their account that Flavius Clemens and his wife, Flavia Domitilla, fell victims to the bloodthirsty suspicion of Domitian in the year 95.⁸⁹ Clemens was the son of Vespasian's brother, Flavius Sabinus, and so Domitian's first cousin. He was married to his own and the emperor's cousin, Domitilla. Talmudic reports testify that the God-fearing Senator, upon the advice of his God-fearing wife, took the poison which he always carried in a capsule on his body. By his death he stopped the execution of the decree of extermination levelled at the Jews. Clemens was executed and Domitilla banished to the island Pandataria. Before his death the Senator is said to have had himself circumcised.⁹⁰ The Jews in their proselyte-propaganda seem to have been exceedingly successful in converting men and women of influence and social standing. Politics and marriage played some part, that is true, but there can be no doubt that many became proselytes out of conviction and sincere admiration for the monotheistic religion of the Jews.

Although the Jews were very fortunate in their proselytizing activities among the social elite, their greatest success lay with the common people. The women were more impressionable and responded more readily than did the men. In Damascus nearly the whole female portion of the inhabitants was devoted to Judaism. The Jewish rite of circumcision, so repugnant to many men in the Roman empire, did not apply to women, and they consequently found the entrance requirements less severe. In Antioch a large number of Greeks attended the religious services in the synagogues, and the Jews treated them as in a certain sense part of themselves.⁹¹ Paul in Acts addressed those assembled in the synagogue as "Men, Israelites, and those of you who fear God."⁹²

⁸⁸ Jos. Ant. xx. 8. 11. ⁸⁹ Cassius Dio lxxvii. 14.

⁹⁰ Hermann Vogelstein, History of Jews in Rome (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1940), p. 71.

⁹¹ Emil Schürer, A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1885), III. 167.

⁹² Acts 13:16.

It is necessary to point out that there were degrees of conversion. Full proselytes were those who accepted the three essential obligations: circumcision, the bath of purification, and the sacrifice in the temple. Half proselytes were those who accepted monotheism, the moral precepts of Torah, and the Noachian commandments. These were the "God-fearers." They attended the worship in the synagogue and had entirely given up idolatry, but the food laws and the rite of circumcision were repugnant to them. Everywhere Paul came on his missionary tours he found those two classes of proselytes joined up with the synagogues.

The Jewish propaganda succeeded in implanting the essential ideas of the God of Israel in the pagan world. It was not only the full proselytes and the "God fearers" that had been influenced thereby, but also many of the intelligentsia and the cultured classes, who despised the superstitious idolatry of the common people.⁹³

Some authorities in this field are of the opinion that the proselyte-propaganda practically ceased with the destruction of Jerusalem. But this is not the case. It put a damper on the missionary zeal for a time and slowed down the missionary activities as long as the feeling of animosity reigned supreme. But it started again with new fervor after the rebellions, with a slightly different emphasis. According to Josephus, there prevailed in his days, among the inhabitants of Greek and barbarian cities, a great zeal for the Jewish religion. This refers to Domitian's last years, two decades after the fall of Jerusalem, in 70 A. D.⁹⁴ This goes to show that the Jewish insurrection did not quench the Gentiles' interest in Jewish religion. Consequently the proselyte propaganda went on as before as long as the missionary zeal within the Jewish communities continued to burn bright and the Gentiles kept up their interest in the Jewish religion. Catastrophies, prohibitions, and persecutions could not extinguish the missionary activities. It was first when the missionary spirit died out in Judaism, that missionary activities ceased.

The proselyte propaganda in the Gentile world had a double purpose in view: to create among the Gentiles a more favorable

⁹³Ch. Guignebert, Le Monde Juif vers le Temps de Jesus (Paris: La Renaissance du Livre, 1935), p. 305.

⁹⁴Josephus Contra Apion. ii. 39.

attitude to Judaism, and to draw Gentiles as proselytes to the Jewish communities. After the destruction of Jerusalem and the Bar Cochba revolt, the first aim became much more important than it had been before. The kingdom of Judea was no more, the city of Jerusalem was in ruins, the temple had gone up in smoke, and the entire people of the Jews was in the Diaspora, living among strangers and at their mercy. It became more necessary than ever for the Jews to employ apologetics and propaganda to ward off attack and to gain the favor and the good will of their neighbors. Instead of ceasing their missionary activities, they redoubled them. Even if circumstances made it necessary for them to put more emphasis on the first aim, they by no means neglected the second. The intense hatred caused by the revolt of the Jews soon died down, and proselytes continued to come in, even influential men and women, like Flavius Clemens and his wife.

Religious competition urged them on. Besides Judaism, there were other cults doing missionary work. Some of the Mystery Religions had been on the field for a long time and continued to go strong. New Mysteries were coming, and probably the most formidable rival was Christianity. Judaism and Christianity both preached monotheism, used the same sacred Book, et cetera. At first they were not so far apart and were easily mistaken one for the other. When the lines of separation became more distinct, and they came to be more or less opposed to one another, this put new oil upon the missionary flame. In a world where missionary activities were so intense, the only way to survive was to get the most followers. It was a question of swim or sink, live or die. Their position in the Gentile world made it necessary for them to defend themselves, and this they did in three ways: by answering their critics--apologetics--, by attacking their critics--polemics--, and by stretching out a friendly hand across the street, seeking for a religious hand-clasp--propaganda. It was a war of both defense and offense, followed by an offer of peace.

The Church Fathers testify almost unanimously to the fact that Jewish proselyte-propaganda continued long after the destruction of Jerusalem, and long after Constantine had issued his famous edict in favor of Christianity. Justin Martyr speaks of the Jews as sending out apostles to convert people.⁹⁵ Chrysostom

⁹⁵ Just. Trypho. 108; of. 17. 117.

(347-407) was bitter against the Jews, because they exercised a great influence at Antioch over the people which adopted Jewish practices, and because the preaching in the synagogue seems to have been more appreciated than in the Church. "One must keep silent about the results of the Jewish proselyte-propaganda so as not to give the enemies of the Church cause for rejoicing."⁹⁶ Jerome (337-420), the well-known Bible translator and expositor, learned Hebrew with all his strength in order to know the original text of the Old Testament so that he would be able to counteract the Jewish propaganda.⁹⁷ Ambrose (340-397) employs strong words against the synagogue, because it was the stronghold of Jewish proselyte-propaganda.⁹⁸ Jewish proselyte-propaganda attempted also to bring Christians over to the Jewish fold. Some of the early Christians were Jews, and for many of them it was almost sacrilegious to break so completely with Judaism as some of the Christians had done. We find the Judaizers at work during the time of Paul. The Judaizers and the Jews could use strong arguments in favor of their case. Christ was circumcised, and so were the apostles; Christ kept the law, and so did the disciples. A special blessing was promised to Abraham and his seed; and in order to obtain that blessing, one had to be a Jew. Quite a few Christians were converted to Judaism. This we know from both Jewish and Christian writers, as well as from the laws promulgated, prohibiting the making of proselytes. If no proselytes were made, as some would have us believe, after the Jewish rebellions, such a law would have been absolutely meaningless.

Voices were heard cautioning against proselytizing: the proselytes come from selfish motives, they are not to be relied upon, they are causing the Jews more sorrow than joy, they will endanger the future purity of the race, et cetera. As long as these voices were in the minority, proselyte-propaganda went on, but when these voices grew to an overwhelming majority, they had a deadening effect upon the whole missionary propaganda. Let us now examine the missionary methods employed by the Jewish propagandists.

⁹⁶Simon Bernfeld, op. cit., p. 346.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 346. (Lucas S. 15.)

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 346. (Lucas S. 17.)

Attractive Features in Judaism

1. Ethical Monotheism

The success or failure of a new religion is due to a series of causes. One of these is the ability to satisfy the innermost desires and longings of men and to fill a need which the older religions have not been able to do. The missionaries of the new religion naturally stress those things that are new and significant and elaborate on their effectiveness and excellencies. Generally speaking, each religion is conscious of its weak points, but no one desires the other religion to point out these weaknesses. The religions in the Early Roman Empire had one common weakness, the Achilles' heel in which they all were vulnerable. This weakness was idolatry and polytheism. Here Judaism had something new to offer, an ethical monotheism.

Monotheism was not entirely unknown in the Graeco-Roman world. The earliest known monotheistic religion emerged in Egypt soon after 1400 B. C.⁹⁹ It flourished for a time, but met with such persistent opposition that it was obliged to give up the fight and surrender, it would seem, unconditionally. Mithraism came nearest to Monotheism, of those religions we have studied before. But it was not consistently so; and leaving out half of humanity from its fold and saving grace, it could hardly lay claim to be a monotheistic religion. Tacitly, it recognized other gods when arrangement was made with contemporary cults to serve the religious needs of their women-folks.

But Judaism was the first ethical and consistent monotheistic religion. It was through the teachings of their prophets that the Hebrews reached the stage of pure monotheism. Even with them, it required centuries before the last trace of idolatry disappeared. They first arrived at monolatry. God came to be considered the One God and their God, but He was not yet the God of all nations and of the universe. All through their history, up to this time, their great weakness had been serving other gods beside Yahweh. Finally they learned their lesson, through bitter experience. This took place in Diaspora by seeing the corruption of the polytheistic religions and their inability to satisfy the inner cravings of the human heart.

⁹⁹ James Henry Breasted, The Dawn of Conscience (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p. 22.

Polytheism and immorality are the two chief counts in the indictment which the Jewish writers bring against paganism. The anti-Jewish writings are not especially moderate in their condemnations; but with viciousness in their lives, they do not charge the Jews. This is quite significant because the Jews continually repeated this accusation.

Yahweh was the only true God. All the gods that the Gentiles worshipped were but idols, work of men's hands, and could not be considered as gods. The pagan deities were considered by the Jews either as angels, set by God over the seventy peoples of the world, or as demons, or deified dead men, or as nothing at all. The most sweeping condemnation of the idols was given by the prophet when he said: "They cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good."¹⁰⁰ But the God of Israel was the Creator of the universe and of all men. He was the Eternal God, the Almighty, the God of history, and the God of providence. He was an ethical God and demanded ethical living by those who served Him. He was the Holy One of Israel, and all unrighteousness and impurity was an abomination to Him.

The greatest abomination to Him was the serving and worshipping other gods. The idea behind this was: You become like the god you worship; you partake of his character, whether good or bad. The Mystery Religions stressed initiation to the detriment of ethical living. Their gods were by no means ethical gods, as their myths show. A religion cannot hope successfully to demand a higher ethics of its followers than that set by its god. The soil was pretty well prepared by the philosophers, who had used all their eloquence to lampoon, and ridicule, and condemn the whole system of idolatry. When, therefore, Judaism consistently preached a pure monotheism and an ethical God, there was a considerable response. The imageless worship in their synagogues appealed to those of a philosophical mind; and to the ethical demand, their conscience gave unqualified consent.

It was this ethical monotheism that brought many into the Jewish sphere of influence, either as full proselytes or as half-proselytes. And it was this doctrine that the Jews stressed more than any other in their proselyte-propaganda. In this particular point, they were strict, while in other points there was a tendency

¹⁰⁰Jer. 10:5.

towards compromise, as we have seen. But both the Eleazar-type and the Ananias-type were equally strict on this fundamental requirement. The prophecy of Baruch had its fulfilment:

I will scatter this people among the Gentiles that they may do good to the Gentiles. The Father and Creator of the universe did not abandon mankind. He gave a law and sent holy prophets to proclaim it and to teach the race of men that each of us might awaken and come to know that there is one God.¹⁰¹

The first step in conversion was the disposal of the idols. They were an abomination in the sight of God. They and Yahweh could not be worshipped together. One or the other must be discarded.

2. Righteousness and Morality

This naturally follows as a sequence from the idea of an ethical God. Being ethical He cannot do an immoral or unrighteous deed. It would be to act contrary to his nature. He is just and righteous, as well as compassionate and kind, but his demands are strict and binding. The prophet Micah expressed God's requirements in this way: "What does Jehovah require of thee but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?"¹⁰² Ritual righteousness was stressed by the Mystery Religions as well as by early Israel. Righteousness was looked upon mostly in a forensic sense. It was due to Amos and his successor-prophets that social righteousness came to be looked upon as more pleasing to God than ritual righteousness. With Amos, social righteousness is a religious service, without which ritual righteousness is but an empty shell and displeasing to God. In Hosea, righteousness becomes potentialized with mercy and kindness. With Isaiah, righteousness and justice are shown by solicitude for the weak and the helpless. He that is righteous endeavors to see that the weak, the poor, the orphaned and the widowed secure their rights. Righteousness becomes synonymous with morality, and the universe a moral universe.

There can be no doubt but that in some instances the Mystery Religions exercised a moral influence upon their devotees, in spite of the fact that these religions did not stress ethical living and social righteousness to the same extent as Judaism did. They stressed redemption through union with the gods and through

¹⁰¹Apoc. of Baruch I:4; cf. S. Angus, The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 49.

¹⁰²Micah 6:8.

initiations, letting the social righteousness more or less take care of itself. Judaism stressed the "turning" to God, a change of heart, expressed in righteous living, and righteous and kind deeds. Turning to God, in Judaism, meant a turning, too, in lovingkindness and mercy towards one's fellow men. Service to God cannot be divorced from social righteousness.

The Gentiles were urged to live a virtuous and righteous life, and the prospective proselytes were instructed in the "New Way." "Love righteousness, you judges of the earth" begins the "Wisdom of Solomon." And the Sibylline Oracles exhort: "Honor righteousness and deal oppressingly with no man, for this is the everlasting command to wretched mortals."¹⁰³ Philo speaks with pride of "those who have come over to the worship, become at once prudent, and temperate, and modest, and gentle, and merciful, and humane, and venerable, and just, and magnanimous, and lovers of truth, and superior to all considerations of money or pleasure."¹⁰⁴

There can be no doubt that the high ethical and moral tone of Judaism was a drawing force for many Gentiles. The many women in every country, some of them in high social standing, that became proselytes or "God-fearers," may have done so for this very reason. The low moral tone in many of the myths of the Mystery Religions and the national gods may have driven many women to embrace Judaism with its strong moral tone and its emphasis upon morality and social righteousness. Schürer gives as one of the reasons for the success of proselytism, "the fact that the Jewish religion aimed at the practical realization of a moral and happy life."¹⁰⁵

The righteous man will not be exempt from difficulties, persecutions, and sufferings. Job had to suffer in spite of the fact that God Himself bore him testimony, that he was "a perfect and upright man. "The suffering servant of the Lord," in performing its Lord-given task, had to accomplish it through suffering. But all will turn out right in the end. God will justify His servants. Their service to humanity will be great, and God will reward His faithful servants.

¹⁰³Sibyl. Or. iii. 630, 631.

¹⁰⁴Philo On Repentance. 2.

¹⁰⁵Schürer Geschichte. iii. 157 (English translation, Div. II, Vol. II), p. 269.

3. Humane Laws

Judaism had her sacred Scripture; consisting of: Law, Prophets, and the writings, or Wisdom Books. Of these parts the Jews considered the Law as the most important. Part of the Law (Torah) was statutory and part was non-statutory. The statutory part is comparatively short, only about ninety verses in the whole Pentateuch. The great bulk of the statutory law is found in Exodus 21-23 and Deuteronomy 21-25. The Rabbis deduced 613 Pentateuchal precepts or roots from the Mosaic law. They were all revealed by God, and for this reason they were called "roots."¹⁰⁶

These laws cover all of man's relations to God and man's relation to man. Confucius had much to say about man's relations to man, what he calls "The Five Relations." These include emperor and minister, father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband and wife, friend and friend, but he leaves out altogether man's relation to God. Judaism put this relation first. God is the foundation and the capstone of the whole Jewish law; God is the Creator, the Lord of all, the Giver of the law and of every good gift. Men owe Him obedience, reverence, love, and worship. This is the first and the greatest commandment in the Law.

The family was the unit of society, and as such the most important of social institutions. The relationship between husband and wife, between parents and children, between the master and slave, and the duty of kinsmen to one another are all regulated by law. Considering the great antiquity of the law, and that it was given, at least in part, to a nomadic and tribal people, we all recognize it to be very humane and in advance of its time. Regulations and laws are given for disposal or sale of land, for loans, interest, bailments, torts, marriage and divorce, ransom, legal procedure, cities of refuge, et cetera. The social character of Jewish ethics is reflected in the Pentateuchal legislation concerning the sabbath, the Sabbatical and Jubilee years, and land tenure. It forms the motive power of the other portions of the Law, as well as of the prophetic calls for justice between rich and poor, and the visions of peace within each nation and among the nations.

The status of women in Judaism was higher, and they were

¹⁰⁶Harris Franklin Rall and Samuel S. Cohon, Christianity and Judaism Compare Notes (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1927), p. 66.

better protected by law than anywhere else. The purity of the home and of family relations, the love of parents for their children, the respect, honor, and filial piety shown to their parents and elders, the treatment of slaves and of their manumission, all impressed the community and society as something good and desirable. Probably no other law attracted so much attention as the law in regard to the Sabbath. Rest-days and festivals were not entirely unknown in ancient times, but what was new was their prevalence and their regularity every seventh day, and their religious nature. Such a law was looked upon by some as a sign of laziness and unprofitable for society by putting a stop to the productive activities of society.

But what most people very soon came to realize was, that it was a beneficial law, helpful to society and men. Slaves in Jewish homes were not allowed to work on a Sabbath. It was a day of rest for them. They naturally came to look upon the Sabbath as a day of rest and recuperation. The animals of burden also got the benefit of such a law. The Sabbath legislation conferred so much blessing upon men, that similar laws have been enacted even in non-Christian lands.

Eight ostraka, ranging in date from 15 A. D. to 44 A. D. have recently been discovered. They are all dated by the "Sebaste Day" (emperor day). Deissmann thinks that the "Sebaste Day" was instituted in connection with the Emperor worship, and that the name "Lord's Day" may have been given as a protest against emperor worship. In three passages, where the "Sebaste Day" is mentioned in the inscriptions, the reference is to money payments of a religious nature.¹⁰⁷ There can be little doubt that it was the widespread observance of the Jewish Sabbath that brought into being the "Sebaste Day" as an imitation.

This Sabbath Day celebration was also welcomed by people that worked in Jewish business houses, and it became known as the Jewish worship-day, when Gentiles in large numbers frequented the Synagogue worship. The humane Jewish law, and especially the Sabbath law, drew many Gentiles into the fold of Judaism.

There is another aspect of the Sabbath that also worked in favor of Jewish proselytism. The Jews secured from the Roman Government exemption from military service and from appearing in

¹⁰⁷Adolph Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), pp. 364-5.

court on the Sabbath for fear of breaking the Sabbath law and defilement. This appeared to the common people as a sign that the Jews had the ears and stood well with the authorities. This may have influenced some to become proselytes for material gains. I am sure such prospective candidates were not encouraged overmuch, but they may have been so persistently clever that they were admitted finally.

The Jewish law regarding the stranger and the proselyte may also have made an impression. The Decalogue, in its concise and comprehensive form, must also have impressed many as the quintessence of legislation.

The surrounding nations are pictured as being so impressed by the just and righteous law of Israel, that they wished to obtain such a law for themselves. The Nations

shall hear all these statutes and say: Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who has God so nigh unto them . . . ? And what nation is there so great that has statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?¹⁰⁸

4. An Attractive Cosmology

Judaism had a complete world-view, which seemed satisfactory to the philosophically-minded pagans. Judaism gave the impression of being not only a religion, but also a philosophy. In fact, Judaism could be and was presented as a philosophy, as a legalistic, a sacerdotal, and a mystic religion. It contained all these elements to a more or less degree.

As to the origin of the universe, Judaism had an attractive cosmogony. The coming into being of this universe has troubled philosophers of every age. Judaism presupposed and took for granted the existence of God. They never made an attempt to demonstrate it. Philo is the first Jewish writer who undertakes to prove the existence of God. But he wrote chiefly for Gentile readers.

Genesis gives undoubtedly the most satisfying cosmogony of antiquity. "In the beginning God" In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth.¹⁰⁹ There can be little doubt that the writer of Genesis was a monotheist in his cosmogony. Elohim is, as is well known, plural, but the verb is singu-

¹⁰⁸Deut. 4:6-8.

¹⁰⁹Gen. 1:1.

lar. The Creator is one, and all things were created by Him. The heavenly luminaries were created by God and ought, therefore, not to be worshipped in place of the Creator. The stars were thought of as affecting the fate and destiny of men. Astrology had been made almost into a science and a religion. Men were in constant fear of their evil influences. To such men, the Jewish cosmology appealed. These stars were neither to be feared nor worshipped. They were but created luminaries and could not and would not harm men in any way.

Men were living in a friendly universe. God had created man in his own image. He was the Protector and Friend of every human being. He was the only Supreme Being, the Creator and the First Cause of the universe, the Ruler of the world and of the affairs of men, the Supreme Judge and Father, tempering justice with mercy, working out his purposes through agents, individuals, as well as nations and communicating his will through them. God's will and God's power are supreme in the world. He is a Spirit, unchangeable, everlasting, omniscient, omnipresent, merciful, abundant in goodness, gracious and longsuffering. He is the God of history. Nothing happens without his permission. He reveals himself in history. He links the destinies of men and nations. He is the rewarder of the good and the punisher of evil doers. One God, one universe, one human race, and there will come a time when there will be unity of worship, too. Some day, in some way, all men will come to worship one God, the true God, and the only and all-powerful God.

All idols will be destroyed and forgotten. The God who had power to create the worlds, he is God and is to be worshipped. Man is the crown of all created beings. He can have communion with the Almighty. Man's existence on earth is limited in years. What happens after death? Man is immortal. God has prepared another and a better place for men. This world will some day be destroyed, but those that fear the Lord will live on in a happier world. Sin entered this world and wrought havoc in God's creation. But new heavens and a new earth will emerge some day from which sin and evil will be forever banished. Men were beginning in earnest to question the plurality of gods, and they were asking pertinent questions as to the origin and destiny of the universe and of man. This world-view presented by Judaism seemed attractive and satisfying. The Graeco-Roman philosophers, the Stoics,

and the Cynics had prepared the way. The cosmogony and cosmology of the Old Testament proved to be the magnetic needle which drew many pagans within the wings of Shekinah.

5. The Eschatological Hopes

It is true that Jewish eschatology deals primarily and principally with the final destiny of the Jewish nation and the world in general and only secondarily with the future of the individual. The chief concern of the Hebrew legislator, prophet and apocalyptic writer was Israel as a people of God and the victory of his truth and justice on earth. This purposeful scheme included the individual, too.

The Old Testament prophets spoke of the "Day of the Lord," as the future day of judgment. The faithful of the Lord were to receive their reward. God is to judge the people as nations, and the idolotrous nations will receive their judgments.

Later prophets spoke of the Messianic reign, when Israel's subjection to foreign powers will cease. The Holy Land will no longer be inhabited by strangers. Earth and man will be endowed with wondrous fertility.¹¹⁰ Physical ailments and sickness will be no more, and the polluted temple will be replaced with a new and holy one.¹¹¹ Before this happens, a final and decisive struggle will be fought in which Israel will come out victoriously. Many of the wicked among the Gentiles will be wiped out, and then all the Gentiles will be converted to the true God, the God of Israel. "And all the nations which are in the whole earth, all shall turn and fear God truly, and all shall leave their idols, who err after their false error."¹¹² Then the Messianic reign will begin, the "Kingdom of God," called also the "Kingdom of Heaven," to avoid using the sacred name of God.

The "Golden Age" of Israel is in the future. Some nations, e. g. China, had their "Golden Age" in the hoary past. The Chinese have something to remember, but Israel had something great and good to look forward to. This "Golden Age" will be an age of perfect peace and harmony. All wars will cease and perfect good will shall reign supreme. The very nature of the wild animals will be changed.

¹¹⁰ Enoch 10:17-19.

¹¹¹ Enoch 53:6; 91:13.

¹¹² Tobit 14:6.

People who have died will be resurrected. Ezekial seems to limit the resurrection to the Jewish nation,¹¹³ as such. But in Daniel, the resurrection is extended to both the wicked and the righteous: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."¹¹⁴ And in the Apocalypse of Isaiah, we read:

He hath swallowed up death forever; and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of His people will He take away from off all the earth. . . . Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise.¹¹⁵

Such eschatological hopes could not fail to impress people, who were eagerly looking for justice, righteousness, peace, immortality, and perfect felicity. Men in adverse circumstances look eagerly forward to something better. The "Golden Age," the "Kingdom of Heaven," a new world, where death did not reign, this was something to arouse hope, expectancy and longing in many a pagan heart.

Missionary Methods of Judaism

Judaism was not the first missionary religion in the Roman Empire. The Mystery Religions were the trail blazers, the pioneers in missionary propaganda. The Greek Mysteries were of European origin. The Oriental Mysteries came to Greece at an early date, and both the Greek and the Oriental Mysteries invaded the Latin speaking part of the Roman Empire. The religion which the Mysteries propagated was of the polytheistic and redemptive type, and they stressed initiation and secrecy and mystic communion with the gods through sacraments, et cetera.

When Judaism entered the Graeco-Roman world, it was already accustomed to strange and foreign cults coming from other shores. Judaism, in contrast to the Mysteries, was a strict monotheistic religion with no secret initiatory rites, no weird sacred objects to show, and it had no oath binding to secrecy. Judaism was the first thoroughgoing monotheistic religion that invaded Europe, and the Graeco-Roman world in particular.

The Mystery Religions prepared the way for Judaism, and

¹¹³Ezk. 37.

¹¹⁴Dan. 12:2.

¹¹⁵Isa. 25:8; 26:19.

Judaism did the same service for Christianity. The services the Mysteries rendered Judaism consisted in this, that they had created a dissatisfaction with things as they were, and had acquainted the people with other religions and their specific, religious value.

Our task is not to evaluate the different religions, but to study their missionary methods. Naturally they cannot be placed on the same level. But they all tried to do the best they could with the light they had and with the material they had to work with. This much may be said in passing, that coming, as we do, via the Mysteries to Judaism, we have very much the same feeling as a man coming out of the darkness and heaviness of a cave into the brightness of the day and the fresh and invigorating air.

1. Concentration of Propaganda Efforts Upon Certain Classes of People

The earliest form of proselytism among the Jews had for its aim the conversion of the slaves and the aliens living in their land and in their midst. This constituted a very fruitful field for proselytizing endeavors. These two forms of proselytizing always seemed natural, even inevitable to a man of ancient times. Slaves and strangers, although foreign in blood, were practically members of that household and that community in which they resided. Only a short step was necessary to bring them formally into complete union by appropriate ceremonies. The first Biblical reference to circumcision especially notes that not merely Abraham, but all his household, the slave born there and those bought of strangers, were circumcised.¹¹⁶ Slaves could be bought from the surrounding nations, or from strangers dwelling in the land, and of the descendants of those born in the land.¹¹⁷ Such slaves became the possession of their master and were left to his children for an inheritance like other property. All males, though of foreign blood, whether bought for money or born in the house, were to be circumcised.¹¹⁸ Thus they became an integral part of the community and were admitted to eat the pass-over. They were not to be required to work on the Sabbath.

A considerable number of aliens in this way came into

¹¹⁶Gen. 17:23, 27.

¹¹⁷Lev. 25:44-46.

¹¹⁸Gen. 17:27; Ex. 12:44, 48.

fellowship with Israel down through its history; and this was a very promising field for proselytizing activities. Abraham had 318 trained servants, born in his own house,¹¹⁹ which were among those circumcised together with Abraham himself. We read of a "mixed multitude that went up also with them" out of the land of Egypt, and which later caused the whole Israel to murmur.¹²⁰ What was this mixed multitude? Kalisch supposes that it consisted of native Egyptians anxious to escape the tyranny of the kings. Perhaps it is more probable that it consisted of fugitives from other subject-races, or slaves, anxious for freedom. They may have been half-breeds; we read of the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian.¹²¹ There is no further notice of this multitude. Some of them may have returned to Egypt again; but some must have entered into Canaan with the children of Israel. The children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm trees and dwelt with the tribe of Judah.¹²² Many of the aborigines of Canaan, which the Israelites did not drive out or annihilate,¹²³ must gradually have been absorbed into the community of Israel. They constituted one of the groups from which slaves could be bought, and as such they were circumcised and gradually absorbed into the community. Judges tells us that these aborigines became tributaries to Israel.

This kind of proselytizing started with Abraham, went on through the centuries down to the time when Israel lost its independence, and was rooted up from its homeland, Palestine, at the rebellion led by Bar Cochba. We have no record of anything but persuasion being resorted to in this type of conversion of the slaves. The position of a slave was such in antiquity that he most likely willingly assented to be circumcised, hoping thereby to gain some privileges hitherto withheld from him by his master. The proselytizing of slaves continued in the Diaspora in a slightly different mode.

In Talmud it is forbidden to sell a bondman or a bondwoman to a Gentile master. When manumitted a Canaanite bondman or bondwoman becomes a convert of righteousness and as such undergoes a second baptism. Manumission in Israel could take several forms. Where a master gave a free woman in marriage to his slave,

¹¹⁹ Gen. 14:14.

¹²⁰ Ex. 12:38; Num. 11:4.

¹²¹ Lev. 24:10.

¹²² Jud. 1:16.

¹²³ Jud. 1.

or put phylacteries on him, or caused him to read three verses from Torah in public, his action was understood as freeing him, and he should set him free and give him a deed of manumission.¹²⁴

Manumission on religious grounds was practised throughout ancient Greece, and it even made its way into Jewish and Christian ecclesiastical custom.¹²⁵ The procedure generally took this form: The owner comes with the slave to the temple, sells him there to the god and receives the purchase money from the treasury, the slave having previously paid it in there out of his saving. The slave is now the property of the god; not, however, a slave of the temple but a protégé of the god against all the world, and especially his former master. He is now a completely free man; at the utmost, a few pious obligations to his old master are imposed upon him. The rite takes place before witnesses, a record is taken and often perpetuated on stone. The usual form of such a document runs like this: "Date. N. N. sold to the Pythian Apollo a male slave named S. Y., at a price of . . . minae, for freedom." Then follow any special arrangements and the names of the witnesses.¹²⁶ We find this kind of manumission among the Jews in two stone records from Panticapaeum, the one of which can be definitely dated, 81 A. D.¹²⁷

The sages approved manumission for any religious purpose, even so slight a one as completing the number ten required for celebration of public worship.¹²⁸ That the practice of making proselytes of slaves persisted is indicated by the laws of Hadrian against circumcising a slave. A third century Palestinian Amora permits Jews to buy slaves, because thereby they may be brought "under the wings of Shekinah."

"The heathen slave acquired by a Jew is circumcised, baptized and consequently included within certain limits of Jewish law, such as the observance of the Sabbath."¹²⁹

¹²⁴Jewish Encyclopedia, Art. "Slaves," XI, 403.

¹²⁵Adolf Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), p. 325.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 327.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 325.

¹²⁸Jewish Encyclopedia, XI, 406.

¹²⁹William G. Braude, Jewish Proselyting in the First Five Centuries of the Common Era (Providence, R.I.: Brown University, 1940), p. 15.

2. The Application of Force

The Hasmonean kings, after being victorious over their neighbors, in their eagerness to convert them to Judaism, and in the flush of victory, resorted sometimes to the use of threats and force. At times, this method led to the desired results, and at other times it was unsuccessful. It would, indeed, be much more to our liking simply to ignore the facts and overlook this part of our study. There are similar things in our Christian history which we might wish were not there. But historical facts are there to stay, whether we like them or not. The Hasmonean dynasty had, by successful wars and wise international policy, raised the Kingdom of Judea to one of the most powerful in that part of the world. Some of the neighbors of the Jews had been a constant thorn in the flesh. So had, for example, the Idumeans moved into the land of Judah, after it had been depopulated by the Babylonian Exile. They were idol worshippers and a constant temptation and snare to the Jews, who lived in those parts. The Hasmonean rulers, it seems, were determined to conquer their neighbors and convert them to the worship of Yahweh. The Maccabean kings, John Hyrcanus, Aristobulus, Alexander Jannaeus, planned for and dreamt of a great kingdom, but in all of their conquests, they had the conversion of the conquered nations as one of their chief aims.¹³⁰

John Hyrcanus, after capturing and destroying the fortresses of the Idumeans, gave them the alternative of migrating from the country or accepting the Jewish religion.¹³¹ The Idumeans chose to stay, "and thus it happened for the first time, that any people were compelled to embrace Judaism."¹³² It was a radical step, cutting the Gordian knot once and for all. The Idumeans seem to have been quite satisfied with their new faith.

Aristobulus, following in his father's footsteps, compelled the Itureans, who dwelt at the foot of Mount Hermon, to embrace Judaism. Strabo says that he "obtained a part of the nation of the Itureans and bound them by the bond of circumcision."¹³³

¹³⁰Guignebert, op. cit., p. 295.

¹³¹Josephus Ant. 13. 9. 1.

¹³²Israel Goldberg, Outline of Jewish Knowledge.

¹³³Josephus Ant. 13. 11. 3.

During the reign of Alexander Jannaeus, when the Maccabean kingdom enjoyed its widest extent, we read that the Jews "destroyed Pella because the inhabitants would not change their religious rites for those peculiar to the Jews."¹³⁴ It would seem to have been a pretty general policy of the Maccabees to consolidate their conquest of neighboring territories by converting the peoples to Yahweh. Their policy may have been mistaken--we think it was--but so was the policy of many a Christian monarch. St. Erik of Sweden Christianized the Finns very much the same way as John Hyrcanus did. Many other examples might be cited.

But it was not only the kings that favored such a policy. The same idea seems to have gripped the people in general, too. Josephus relates that at the beginning of the revolt, some men came into Galilee from Trachonites. "The Jews would force them to be circumcised and change their religion," if they desired to stay among them. Josephus remonstrated with the multitude, saying that those who had fled to them for refuge ought not to be persecuted. When the multitude persisted in their demand and made an assault upon the house in which they lived at Taricheae, "in order to kill them," Josephus sent them away secretly into a place of safety.¹³⁵

Horace, in his Satires, writes: "And we, like the Jews, will compel you to make one of our throng."¹³⁶ It is not quite clear whether Horace refers to a historical fact known to him, or if he only wants to impress upon his readers the zeal exhibited by the Jews in their proselyte-propaganda. Most likely it was the latter. It is, of course, not excluded but that the practice of the Hasmonean kings in converting the Gentiles by force was known to him. Members of the Idumean dynasty, ruling Palestine, visited Rome off and on, and these facts could very well have been made known to him either by them or by someone else. Be that as it may, the other instances we have referred to are pretty well generally accepted by Jewish and Christian writers, ancient and modern.

3. Literary Propaganda

The literary form of the proselyte-propaganda took on

¹³⁴Ibid. xiii. 15. 4.

¹³⁵Josephus Life. 23, 31.

¹³⁶Josephus Sat. 1. 4.

various shapes. It expressed itself in form of apologetics when its aim was to answer the various accusations hurled against the Jews and their religion. Generally speaking, the accusations had to do with such matters as these: the Jewish nation in point of antiquity is inferior to other cultural nations, the Jews are atheists, have no culture and have not in any way enriched science, they are disloyal in refusing to worship the emperor, their isolation shows a lack of humanity and true philanthropy, their peculiar rites of circumcision, abstinence from pork, and the keeping of the Sabbath Day are in derision or contempt of other rites practised by other religions. As long as these misconceptions remained unanswered, they stood there as mighty hindrances for proselytizing. Their first aim was to clear away the obstacles and to defend themselves. Their next step was to attack the stronghold of paganism, its immorality, its polytheism, its beliefs, et cetera. This was offensive warfare, polemics, generally fought with heavy artillery. Then the next step was various kinds of propaganda, pleading with the Gentiles to leave idolatry and worship the only true God, the God of the whole universe and of all mankind, to mend their ways and to part with immorality and unethical living.

The literary propaganda covered the following fields: fostering the missionary spirit at home, defending their own religion, direct appeal to the Gentiles; and it was done under the form of historical novels, wisdom literature, apologetics, and pseudepigraphical writings.

(a) Fostering the missionary spirit at home through literature-propaganda.

The book of Jonah was a stirring missionary appeal to Israel. Here was Assyria, the age-long enemy of the chosen people, and steeped in the grossest kind of idolatry. Jonah was told to go there to announce the coming judgment over Nineveh. Sharing the common contempt of his people for a cruel enemy, he was unwilling to go. He tried to escape by going to sea, only to be caught in his own devices. In his predicament, he repented and promised to go, if God only would save him from the sea. He was saved, and went and preached on the streets of Nineveh, with the result that the king with his people repented in sackcloth and ashes and turned to the Lord. Yahweh took pity on them and averted the impending doom. Jonah was displeased and disgruntled

over the compassion of the Lord in sparing the sinful city, and prayed the Lord to take his life. Jonah went eastward outside the city and made himself a booth and sat there. A gourd grew up and gave him shadow over his head. But when the gourd withered away and the rays of the sun struck his unprotected head, he became still more disgusted. Then the Lord said to him,

Thou hast pity on the gourd for which thou hast not labored neither madest it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their left hand and their right; and also much cattle.¹³⁷

The great lesson this book purposed to teach the Israelites was, that the Lord their God took pity upon the Gentiles and sent a messenger to warn them of impending doom. The Assyrians, although steeped in the most degraded idolatry, could still repent and turn to the Lord, when he became known to them. The Lord accepted their repentance and saved the great city. What happened in Nineveh may happen in other Gentile lands, provided the prophets of the Lord can be persuaded to go there.

The book of Ruth describes the story of Naomi, her husband, and two sons. The husband and sons all died in Moab, and Naomi wanted to return to her native land. Her two daughters-in-law were both Moabitesses. Ruth refuses to part with her mother-in-law and accompanies her to Bethlehem where she married Boaz and became an ancestress of David, the great king.¹³⁸ Ruth belonged to those of which the Law said, "An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generations shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord forever."¹³⁹ In Philo, a resident in the Jewish community in Alexandria, we find words directed toward the Jews, bidding them welcome the foreigner. The gist of the law concerning proselytes, he says, is that they, having given up so much, should receive generously of cities and houses and friends; that they ought to have an equal share in all laws, immunities and privileges; and that they should not be spoken to unsympathetically or harshly.¹⁴⁰ In the Rabbinic literature we meet with the expression "to bring under the wings of the Shekinah," implying not only the

¹³⁷Jonah 4:10,11.

¹³⁸Ruth 4: 13-22.

¹³⁹Deut. 23:34.

¹⁴⁰Philo On Monarchy. 1. 7.

coming of the proselyte,¹⁴¹ but also the outstretched hand of welcome. In all missionary enterprises, the cultivating of the "Home Base" is of the utmost importance, especially, as it was in Judaism, if a large per cent of the home constituency is not interested in that type of work.

(b) Defensive and propaganda literature.

This literary form of propaganda and defense was especially active in those communities in which Jews and Greeks spoke a common language and partly shared a common culture. Even books intended primarily for Jewish circulation contain polemics against polytheism and attacks upon pagan customs, which could have been only for the purpose of training the Jews in defense and propaganda methods and to serve a missionary purpose, should the book fall into the hands of a Gentile. Jewish authors write in Greek to further Jewish propaganda. It was their desire to create a better understanding and love for Jewish thought and religion and monotheism.

The author of the "Wisdom of Solomon" appeals to the Gentiles in the character of the great king, who had become traditionally associated with Jewish wisdom. He appeals to men in authority:

Love righteousness, ye that be judges of the earth. Hear, therefore, ye kings and understand; learn ye judges of the ends of the earth; give ear, ye that have dominion over much people and make your boast in multitudes of nations; because your dominion was given you from the Lord. Unto you, therefore, O princes, are my words, that ye may learn wisdom and fall not from the right way.¹⁴²

Some Jew in Egypt wrote the story of Tobit to exalt the Jewish ideal in the eyes of the Gentiles and Jews alike. The Hebrews sought to make their religion and their culture known in the stirring Greek world. The book of Tobit is best understood as part of this missionary movement in Egyptian Judaism.¹⁴³ Other apocryphal books have either a primary or a secondary missionary interest. They were part and parcel of the Jewish missionary enterprise in the Hellenistic world.

Two Jewish writers of this period deserve a special mention. They are Josephus and Philo. Josephus writes for Gentiles.

¹⁴¹Ruth 2:12. ¹⁴²Wisdom 1:1; 6:1-3a; 6:9.

¹⁴³Edgar J. Goodspeed, The Story of the Apocrypha (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 13.

He adapts himself to the capacity of his Greek readers in order to persuade them to receive his picture of Judaism with interest. He was not what we would call a religious man, but he was enthusiastically interested in the Jewish antiquities and writes to make them known to Greek-speaking Gentiles. They could not but get a better idea of the Jews and their religion after perusing his voluminous writings. He wrote an apology for the Jews and their religion, Contra Apion.

Philo wrote from Alexandria. He was part of the Jewish community there. He was a philosopher, well at home, both in Jewish and Hellenistic lore. He chose to interpret Judaism in Greek philosophical language. Judaism for him was the quintessence of all wisdom, and the God of the Hebrews the only God. Some of his writings may not have been written primarily for Gentile readers. But there can be little doubt now, after the appearance of L. Cohn's treatise "The Division of Philo's Writings," that his three books, Life of Moses, were written as an apologetic for Judaism and for propaganda purpose.¹⁴⁴ The tracts on the three virtues are especially directed towards Gentiles, the last of them being an appeal from Moses, lover of the human race, to all men to leave the worship of creatures for the Creator, the mob-sovereignty for the well-ordered democracy, folly for wisdom, cowardice for courage, injustice for righteousness, intemperance for temperance.¹⁴⁵ His enthusiasm, wide knowledge and scholarly presentation enhanced the standing and appreciation of Judaism among the intelligentsia of the Graeco-Roman world and indirectly, at least, furthered the missionary movement.

A very important evidence for the existence of a well-planned, enthusiastic proselyte propaganda in Judaism is the appearance of such propaganda under pagan name, "masquerading under a heathen mask."¹⁴⁶ One of the most important elements in this literature is the Jewish Sibylline Oracles.¹⁴⁷ The Sibyl was in pagan antiquity the semi-divine prophetess concerning the fate of

¹⁴⁴L. Treitel, "Das Judentum als geistige weltreligion," Archiv für Religionswissenschaft, Vol. XXIV, 1926.

¹⁴⁵Philo On Repentance. 1. 2.

¹⁴⁶Schürer, The Jewish People, III, Div. II, 270.

¹⁴⁷R. H. Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), pp. 368-406.

cities and kingdoms. She is represented as a nymph, dwelling by streams and in grottoes. As far as can be ascertained, it was in the second century B. C. that an extensive Sibylline Oracle of Jewish origin was first put in publication from Alexandria. The result seems to have been favorable, for imitators soon arose.

These oracles were especially adapted for being turned to account in the interest of religious propaganda. A few centuries earlier, the Mysteries of Magna Mater owed its introduction into Rome to an Anatolian Sibylline Oracle. A method that had proved so useful and advantageous for the Anatolian Mysteries, why should not the same method, considered at that time both proper and legitimate, be employed by other religions? These oracles were of apocryphal origin, in private possession, circulated without control, and might be completed and added to at pleasure. What could be done by the Greeks and by the Anatolians could also be done by the Jews. These oracles enjoyed a high reputation among religiously disposed minds.

It was difficult for the Jews to gain a hearing in their own name, and so they adopted this expedient of defending themselves and propagating their faith under cover of the illustrious personages of antiquity. Pagan poets were made to bear witness to the sublimity of the Jewish faith and pagan oracles were made to predict a mighty destiny for the Jewish race.¹⁴⁸ Here is one example of the earnest appeal to the Gentiles themselves:

O ill-starred mortals, let not these things be, and drive not the great God to divers deeds of wrath; but have done with swords and moanings and killing of men, and deeds of violence, and wash your whole bodies in ever-running rivers, and, stretching your hands to heaven, seek forgiveness for your former deeds, and with praises ask pardon for your bitter ungodliness. God will grant repentance and will not slay. He will stay His wrath once more, if with one accord ye practice precious godliness in your hearts.¹⁴⁹

(c) Literature for instructing the prospective proselytes.

The conjecture by Hennecke, that the tractate The Two Ways was of Jewish origin and used to instruct the proselytes, is steadily gaining ground. From this catechism we gather that the proselytes were taught the sanctity of the Decalogue, the holiness of God, the heinousness of idolatry, and the necessity of circum-

¹⁴⁸W. D. Morrison, The Jews under Roman Rule (New York: G. P. Putman's Sons, 1899), p. 404.

¹⁴⁹Sibyl.or. iv. 62-70.

cision.¹⁵⁰ How is it, if the circumcision is holy and so absolutely necessary that it is not included in the Decalogue? This question was asked by the proselyte Aquila from Eliezer ben Hyrcanus. He answered: "The commandment of circumcision was a preliminary condition for the Sinaitic revelation and for this reason it had to be given before the Decalogue."

It is not to be supposed that the literary propaganda was the most effective. It was limited by the very field for which it was intended. The chief object of attack was the Greek polytheism and the viciousness of Greek life. In many extant books sexual excesses and perversions are made a constant reproach against the pagans. This is due not so much to the actual life depicted as to the attitude with which even good men regarded these particular incidents.¹⁵¹

4. Sacred Scripture, Septuagint

Closely related to the literary propaganda, but still quite distinct, was the use of Scripture as a form of missionary propaganda. After the destruction of the Temple, the sacred books became the most coveted and priceless possession of Judaism. It was the "Book of the Covenant," wherein Yahweh had revealed His will and made known His demands. Judaism claimed to be a revealed religion. In the Mystery Religions the priests held the first place. They were in possession of the secret formula of initiation. They could open and no one could close. They could shut and no one could open. In Judaism the priests occupied only a secondary place. The revealed will of God, His "Word," held the seat of preëminence.

The sacred books of Judaism were written in the Hebrew tongue, which was the sacred language of the Jews. In the Diaspora, the Jews, after several generations, forgot their sacred tongue. Greek became their everyday language. It was only on the Sabbath that Hebrew was used. But as it was not understood by the worshippers, it had to be translated into Greek. Oral translation naturally left very much to desire. It became a dire

¹⁵⁰ Hennecke, Neutestamentlichen Apokryphen, p. 185. Cf. J. Bergmann, Jüdische Apologetik im Neutestamentlichen Zeitalter (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1908), p. 103.

¹⁵¹ Max Radin, The Jews Among the Greeks and Romans (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1915), p. 160.

necessity for the Jewish congregations in the Diaspora to have a Greek translation of the Sacred Scriptures. This was the main reason for the translation, and a very pressing one. Another reason was that the Gentiles began increasingly to show an interest in the Sacred Scripture of the Jews and desired to have a translation in their own tongue. Then came the period in Judaism, when the missionary spirit took hold of the leaders and the people, and then their Sacred Scripture, the Septuagint (so called because it was believed that seventy scholars had taken part in the translation) became a very valuable asset.

According to Aristeeas, the Pentateuch was translated at the time of Philadelphus the second Ptolemy (285-247 B. C.), which translation, it is said, was encouraged by the king and welcomed by the Jews of Alexandria. It is not known when the other books of the Bible were translated.¹⁵² But that it was done before any of the New Testament books were written is a foregone conclusion, as the New Testament writers quote almost exclusively from the Septuagint.

A new translation of the Sacred Scripture was undertaken by Aquila. He is said to have been a proselyte to Judaism and a pupil of Rabbi Akiba, and he lived during the reign of Hadrian (117-138 A. D.). Two reasons are given for this new translation: the appropriation of the Septuagint by the Christian Church; and its divergence from the accepted Masoretic text. Aquila's translation is said to have been literal and somewhat pedantic. It was popular with the Jews in the days of Origen, Jerome and Augustine. Apart from citations by Christian writers, only a few fragments have come down to us.¹⁵³

Theodotion, in the second century A. D., made a second revision of Septuagint. His Greek gives a very readable text. His translation of Daniel entirely displaced that of Septuagint. Only fragments are found in Origen's Hexapla. Theodotion is sometimes said to have been a convert to Judaism.¹⁵⁴

Symmachus, whose date is unknown, tried to smooth down Aquila's "un-Grecian Greek" by the use of both Septuagint and Theodotion. He was the best stylist of them all. Epiphanius

¹⁵²The Jewish Encyclopedia, Art. "Bible Translation" (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1906), p. 186.

¹⁵³Ibid.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p. 187.

says he was a Samaritan and a convert to Judaism.¹⁵⁵

The translation of the Old Testament made the Gentiles acquainted with Jewish religion and Jewish law. Luke's picture of the eunuch, returning home from a trip to Jerusalem, reading a roll of the prophets was not an isolated case.¹⁵⁶ Philo thinks that the Greek translation of the Old Testament was a most admirable thing and serviceable in the leading of Gentiles to the Jewish law.¹⁵⁷ The Septuagint was read in the Synagogue together with an expository sermon. Judaism appeared as something like a philosophy, its monotheism made an impression, and its creation story in Genesis helped them formulate their own cosmogony and cosmology. The claim to the possession of such an authoritative revelation in its Scripture attracted converts to Judaism, as it did afterwards to Christianity.¹⁵⁸ As a book, Septuagint was bulky, expensive, and inaccessible except for the well-to-do. But the reading and exposition of the Sacred Book in the synagogue constituted the chief attraction and exerted a tremendous influence in ever-widening circles. The Septuagint "kept millions in the old faith, to win fresh millions, for whom the Hebrew text would have remained a buried treasure."¹⁵⁹

After the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, Judaism became more than ever a "book religion." Israel's religion became a Torah-religion. In the law, the Prophets and the Psalms, the Jews found an ever-regenerating power, a vitalizing and energizing force which brought comfort and strength and courage in times of severe testing. The law, not the Temple, became the bond of union that united the Jews all over the world. The great catastrophe of the ruining of the center of worship and the capture of Jerusalem increased rather than diminished the ties which united the people. It became evident that the real bond which kept them together was not the Temple but the Lord of the Temple, and His Torah. The God of Israel could not be confined within a sanctuary built by man, but His will was enshrined in Torah. So

¹⁵⁵The Jewish Encyclopedia, Art. "Symmachus," III, 187.

¹⁵⁶Acts 8:27 f. ¹⁵⁷Philo Life of Moses. 2. 5.

¹⁵⁸G. F. Moore, Judaism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), Vols. I and II, passim.

¹⁵⁹Hausrath, New Testament Times, I, 114; cf. S. Angus, The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 52.

the Torah became increasingly more precious to the Jews themselves and ever more valuable in their missionary activities.

5. Synagogue Worship

The name *synagōgē*, both in the Talmud and the New Testament, means a meeting house for religious purpose. The word "synagogue" is not used by Josephus. He speaks of their *proseuchae*, a place of prayer, by the seaside.¹⁶⁰ Josephus also speaks of *σαββαταῖον* which would indicate that it was used chiefly during the Sabbath Day.

The origin of the Synagogue is not quite certain, but the theory expressed by Wellhausen, that the Synagogue originated in the Babylonian Exile as a necessary requirement to take the place of the Temple and to maintain the cultural communion among the exiles, has found favor with most of the Biblical scholars. It was further developed in Palestine during Ezra and Nehemiah and in the Diaspora. The scribes came to regard the synagogue institution as an unsurpassed instrument for the inculcating of the teaching of the Law. They accordingly invested it with divine sanction and ascribed its origin to Moses himself.¹⁶¹

We have archaeological evidences for the existence of Synagogues in Egypt as early as the third century B. C.,¹⁶² and in Greece as early as the second century B. C.; the date of the earliest remains of a Synagogue found in Palestine is the first century A. D.

There was no specific law in regard to the Synagogue. The name is not even mentioned in the Old Testament. It may be argued that the Synagogue as an institution is in contravention to the command of the law. "But unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name there, even unto His habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come."¹⁶³ The Temple worship, as a national shrine, was highly

¹⁶⁰Jos. Ant. xiv. 10, 23.

¹⁶¹Of. Jos. Contra Apion. 11. 18.

¹⁶²Namely a synagogue inscription from the ancient Schedia-quarter of Alexandria, dated in the reign of Ptolemy III, Euergetes (247-221 B. C.). E. D. Sukemik, Ancient Synagogues in Palestine and Greece (London: Oxford University Press, 1934).

¹⁶³Deut. 12:5; of. Deut. 12:11, 14.

important in its day and made some permanent contributions to the religion of Israel: It made the ancient worship of Israel a national one; it destroyed the prevalence of pagan ideas in Judaism; it gave to the ancient traditional sacrifice a spiritual meaning; it proved a bond of unity which prevented the Southern tribes from sharing the fate of the Northern, to whom exile meant dissolution;¹⁶⁴ it made the religion of Israel respected and known among the nations by the stateliness of its sanctuary and the impressiveness of its worship; and brought many proselytes and God-fearers there to worship. Especially the musical service, the singing of the Psalms, and the prayers, appealed to the pilgrims and to the Gentiles.

But the destruction of the second Temple was a gain rather than a loss to Judaism and humanity. By the providence of God it was not allowed to survive its own usefulness. From a very early period there had been those who saw in the Temple a danger to the spirituality of the religion of Israel. Even Solomon in his dedicatory prayer is made to declare: "Heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee."¹⁶⁵ The prophet Jeremiah had warned the people of the first Temple that it was not inviolable. Even the earlier prophets had declared the sacrificial system harmful to true religion.

It was the Synagogue that saved Judaism from disintegration after the destruction of the second Temple. Synagogues had already become an established fact, and the non-sacrificial ritual of the synagogue soon became the distinguishing feature of Judaism, making its practice possible in every part of the world. The power and influence of the synagogue soon eclipsed that of the Temple at Jerusalem and gave birth both to the Church and the mosque. In contrast with the Temple, the Synagogue worship was new and simple. The practice of reading and expounding the Scripture to the assembly invested Judaism with a hitherto unknown spirituality. It was the genius of Israel which produced both the prophets and the Synagogue as a house of prayer and of communion with God.

The three cardinal principles for which the Synagogue stood were: the absolute unity of God, the observance of and the

¹⁶⁴ Foakes Jackson, Josephus and the Jews, *passim*.

¹⁶⁵ I Kings 8:27.

loyalty to the Torah, and the world-wide Messianic outlook.¹⁶⁶ The real dynamic power, the fashioner and refashioner of Judaism in the various ages and lands, was the Synagogue, the house of public instruction and common prayer.

The chief use of the synagogue was for worship, edification, instruction and discipline. It served as a community house and the seat of the spiritual government for the Jewish community. The religious worship greatly influenced the Gentile communities. In its solemnity and simplicity there was a tremendous drawing power, and every one that witnessed these services was very much influenced by them. No image was seen there, to which prayer was directed, but the Spirit of the unseen God made His presence felt everywhere in the Sanctuary.

The worship in the Synagogue, on a Sabbath morning, generally took this form:

- (a) Opening Prayer. (People standing, facing toward Jerusalem).
- (b) Reading of the Shema (Deut. 6:4).
- (c) Reading of the lesson for the day. (Pentateuch was divided into 154 portions to be read in Synagogue during a period of three years.)
- (d) Translation into the vernacular. (Generally after the reading of three verses of Scripture.)
- (e) Reading of the Prophets.
- (f) Practical Discourse.
- (g) Benediction.¹⁶⁷

According to Philo and Josephus, the purpose of the Synagogue was to promote the moral and religious education of the community.¹⁶⁸ It was impossible to frequent the Synagogue without becoming thoroughly familiar with the lofty moral elements contained in the Law and the great ideals of righteousness, mercy, and humility enunciated in the impassioned language of the prophets. It was the Synagogue which achieved this immense result. The Synagogue was the center of the life of the Jewish community, and the central object in the Synagogue was the Torah. The sac-

¹⁶⁶ Kaufmann Kohler, The Origins of the Synagogue and the Church (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1929), pp. 138-145.

¹⁶⁷ W. D. Morrison, The Jews Under Roman Rule, pp. 247-250.

¹⁶⁸ Philo De Vita Mosie. ii. 167; Josephus Contra Opon. ii. 18.

ificial rites went with the Temple, and Judaism does not seem to have missed them overmuch either. The sacrifices demanded by God were not material and bloody. The sacrifice He desired was a living sacrifice of consecrated souls.

The shifting of the center of worship from the Temple to the Synagogue was a revolutionizing one. It spiritualized the religion and made it conform more closely to the monotheistic and universalistic teaching of the Torah. Was Yahweh the only, universal God? Then He must not be appropriated by one people only, and His worship must not be localized to one place.

Very naturally, therefore, the Synagogue became the center of the proselyte-propaganda.¹⁶⁹ The Synagogue was frequented not only by the Jews, but also by the proselytes, the "God-fearers," and the Gentiles. These non-Jews learned to appreciate the Synagogue so much that they even went to the extent of building Synagogues for the Jews. "For He loves our nation, and He has built us a Synagogue." This testimony was made to Jesus, by the elders of the Jews in reference to a Roman centurion.¹⁷⁰ Wherever Paul went on his missionary journeys, he found Jewish Synagogues and went there to preach the Gospel. Acts mentions Synagogues in Salamis, Antioch (Pisidia) Iconium, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus.¹⁷¹ In Antioch many Gentiles came to the Synagogue to hear Paul, and it is related that they "besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath."¹⁷² Connected with these Synagogues was a group of proselytes and "God-fearers." The Synagogue worship evidently was very much frequented by the Gentiles, and in this way they learned to appreciate and worship the God of Israel. Some broke completely with their former life and with their relations and became full proselytes; others stopped half-way, and are referred to as "God-fearers." The Jews seem to have welcomed these strangers to their worship. They may even have invited them to attend. It was a common knowledge that the Jews rested on the seventh day.

¹⁶⁹Oskar Holtzmann, *Neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte*, 2-te Auflage (Tübingen, 1906), pp. 252-53.

¹⁷⁰Luke 7:3-5.

¹⁷¹Acts 13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:1 f., 10, 17; 18:4, 19.

¹⁷²Acts 13:43, 44.

All Jewish shops and businesses were closed on the Sabbath, and everybody knew that this was the day for the Jews to worship their God.

In their eagerness to impress the occasional or regular visitor, the Jews naturally laid stress upon making the services as helpful and impressive as possible. The Gentiles intuitively sensed that Judaism was on a higher level than the pagan religions. Religion and sincerity, religion and morality, were equally emphasized in Judaism. The Jews evidently succeeded in making their worship services attractive and satisfying.

But what about the Synagogue itself? What about the Synagogue-art?

Braude has convincingly shown that the impulse to proselyte-propaganda was very strong in Judaism, that the Rabbis were favorably disposed to it, that the Hadrianic and other persecutions did not dampen Jewish aspirations to win Gentiles to the faith of Israel, and that missionary activities continued throughout the so-called Talmudic period.¹⁷³ Revolutionary changes were going on in the world at large, and within Judaism itself. The Jewish religion was at stake. Judaism had sustained the most deadly blow during all its history. The Jews had completely lost their independence; their capital was destroyed and their Temple lay in ruin, and there was no hope of getting permission to rebuild it either. New ways had to be found. The Torah and the Synagogue came to take the place of the Temple and the sacrificial rites. Their law needed to be adapted to the new situation. It could not be enforced in its totality. Rival religions were doing active missionary propaganda, with the object of winning the Gentiles to their faith, and some even attempted to win the Jews. Radical changes had to be undertaken and new departures made.

This was nothing new. Judaism was not a static religion. During the Babylonian captivity it assimilated to itself the Persian angelology and demonology, the doctrine of resurrection, much of its eschatology and future world view.¹⁷⁴ The precarious situation in which the Jews found themselves, and the all-pervad-

¹⁷³William G. Braude, Jewish Proselyting in the First Five Centuries of the Common Era (Providence, R. I.: Brown University, 1940), *passim*.

¹⁷⁴Franz Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1911), p. 38.

ing Hellenistic culture necessitated a new orientation. The Synagogue took the place of the Temple and the non-sacrificial worship that of the sacrificial. In order to meet the new demands, new Synagogues had to be built and old ones renovated in order to accommodate the increasing number of Gentiles which came there to worship. Derwacter in a very suggestive passage says: "The Synagogue could be and doubtless was often consciously adapted to the needs of the foreigner."¹⁷⁵ Numerous Jewish Synagogues have been excavated during the last quarter of a century, in Palestine and the Diaspora, which conclusively show that the Synagogues could be and were adapted to new circumstances. Was it an adaptation to the needs of the foreigner, or what was it? We refer here to what is known as the Synagogue-art.

This art is found practically everywhere in those places where Jews dwelt and built their Synagogues, in Diaspora as well as in Palestine.¹⁷⁶ The Synagogue-art is both Jewish and non-Jewish. According to the Mosaic law, Israel was prohibited from making "any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in the Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth."¹⁷⁷ There always has been a school in Jewry which constructed it as a prohibition of all such representations. Others pointed out that the intention of the lawgiver was to qualify this verse by the following one, and to prohibit only the worshipping of images, or the making of images for purposes of worship.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Frederick Milton Derwacter, Preparing the Way for Paul (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1930), p. 96.

¹⁷⁶ "Curiously enough not a single surviving Synagogue belongs to the New Testament period." The reason for this apparent anomaly is naturally that most Synagogues of Palestine were destroyed either in the first or second Jewish revolt, that is, between 66 and 135 A. D.

W. F. Albright, The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1935).

¹⁷⁷ Ex. 20:4; Deut. 5:8.

¹⁷⁸ With respect to the making of images and the attitude toward them, we may distinguish roughly three periods: (a) The period of earlier Israel used images in the Tabernacle, Temple, and palace with very little restriction (I Kgs. 6-7; II Chron. 3-4;); (b) After the return from the Exile, the iconoclastic spirit ruled. No representation of animate life seems to have been allowed; (c) In the late first and early second centuries A. D., a strange change took place. Art was produced all over the

The Jews in their eagerness to secure proselytes reinterpreted old commands in such a way that they would not be an obstacle to their proselytizing. An anonymous Baraita asserts that Boaz had promulgated the Halakic principle, that the exclusion in Deuteronomy 23:3 refers to an Ammonite, but not to an Ammonitess, to a Moabite, but not to a Moabitess. The injunction against the Edomites was ignored, and they were taken in en masse.¹⁷⁹ Rabbi Joshua B. Hananiah laid down this significant rule (ca. A. D. 90): Since Sennacherib brought about such a general confusion of races, the two generation requirements for Edomite proselytes could no longer obtain.¹⁸⁰ In the Babylonian Gemara, the question is asked: "Is there not a difference between a village and a city?" Yes, in the village all images are prohibited because they are worshipped there; not so in the city because here they serve as adornments.¹⁸¹ In reference to the particular parts of images, hands and feet are prohibited because the pagans used to kiss the hands and feet of their idols.¹⁸² The majority of the Scribes attempt to define the proper meaning of the prohibition against images. They arrived at this conclusion: "Only that sculpture (Bildwerk) is prohibited in whose hand a scepter, or a bird, or a ball rests" (cf. the eagle in the right hand of Zeus). Rabbi Simeon B. Gamaliel laid down this rule: "All sculptures in whose hands something rests is prohibited."¹⁸³

Goodenough, Rostovtzeff, Sukenik and others have done extremely valuable work in this field by elucidating this intricate problem. Several attempts have been made to get at and behind the real motivation for this unsuspected existence of Synagogue-art. Prophylactics, superstition, even magic have been proposed as a possible motivation. The difficulty here is the frequency

Roman world, and the Rabbis brought forth new interpretations. Some Rabbis still opposed it, others were dubious. Cf. Father Frey, Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum (E Civitate Vaticana, 1935), passim.

¹⁷⁹Deut. 23:7, 8.

¹⁸⁰William G. Braude, Jewish Proselyting in the First Five Centuries of our Era, pp. 49, 59.

¹⁸¹Gemara 41. a; cf. Johannes Leipoldt, Anti-Semitismus in der Alten Welt (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1933), p. 22.

¹⁸²Leipoldt, op. cit., p. 22; Mishna 3.2.

¹⁸³Ibid., Mishna 3.1.

of its appearance and its universal geographical distribution in the Roman empire. Were we to accept this explanation, we would have to postulate that practically the whole of Judaism was tainted by it. We do not think that this was the case. Judaism had not deteriorated that far. Other explanations will have to be found.

We agree with Goodenough that this art was used, at least in part, symbolically. But the question remains unanswered, "Why was it so used?" Why did the Jews need to borrow pagan art at all when they had a plethora of their own? We suggest that the introduction of the Synagogue-art was part of the widespread, active missionary propaganda, and that it was employed chiefly to interest and influence the non-Jewish part of the people that frequented the Synagogues.

Every missionary today will tell us that illustrative, pictorial material, especially when drawn by native artists, using native motifs, will draw crowds and hold their interest for hours. It will give the missionary, if present, an opportunity to answer many questions and explain the lessons the pictorial representations are supposed to teach.

We know that art was used by the Mystery Religions for missionary purposes. It was so used by Christianity which so copiously copied Judaism.

In support of our thesis, we propose the following arguments:

(a) The Synagogue-art had its inception and flourished at a time in Jewish history when the Jews felt themselves called upon to make several reorientations; e. g. the translation of their Scripture into Greek, the creation of an apologetic missionary literature, the active proselyte-propaganda, the shifting of emphasis from the Temple and the sacrificial rites to the Synagogue and the non-sacrificial rites, the reinterpretation of their Scripture to suit the demands of the time and allow non-eligible people to come in as proselytes, the attempt to make Judaism a universal religion, et cetera. These were all revolutionary changes and were all connected in some way or other with their missionary endeavors.

(b) The Synagogue-art was employed to make the synagogue more attractive to prospective proselytes and in order to make the transition hoped-for from the old religion to the new easier.

The Synagogue was the chief proselyte recruiting station. More proselytes were won by the Synagogues than by any other method. Herein lay the importance of making the Synagogue attractive to the Gentiles. The motive here was partly to interest, partly to educate.

(c) The Synagogue-art was adopted to compete with other religious groups. An intensified struggle for the souls of men went on in the Graeco-Roman world, the like of which has hardly ever been equaled. All were out to win converts, and the competition was very keen. Methods which had proved their value in one religion were quickly adopted by others. In Dura Europos we find a Jewish Synagogue and a Christian Church within two blocks from one another, both making the fullest use of Church and Synagogue-art in, we hope, a friendly competition.

(d) The Synagogue-art served as an apologetic against the slanderous accusation that the Jews were enemies of culture and had done nothing to further progress. What could more effectively put the lie to such a slander than to employ art, both of their own and of carefully selected pagan, in their synagogues!

(e) The Synagogue-art was contemporaneous with the age of Jewish proselytizing. The excavation of Jewish Synagogue remains, of late years, has unmistakably shown that it was during the active Jewish proselytizing period that the Synagogue-art flourished in the Graeco-Roman world. It is also a remarkable coincidence that simultaneously with the Jews losing their missionary zeal and giving up their proselyte-propaganda, the Synagogue-art disappears almost over night. No more frescoes were made, no new mosaics laid, and the Synagogue-art already in use was chiselled off or destroyed in some other way. How are we to explain this contemporaneousness of coming into being, flourishing, and disappearance of the Synagogue-art and the proselyte-propaganda? Coming into being at the same time, coexisting simultaneously and mysteriously passing away at the same period would seem to furnish us with a strong probability that there actually existed an intimate and a vital relationship between the two.

(f) The Synagogue-art could hardly have won such a general acceptance had it not been motivated by a high and noble purpose. Such a purpose we find in the worthy attempt to bring the Gentiles under the wings of Shekinah. Making Yahweh known and believed and respected and worshipped in the world was an

undertaking big enough and worthy enough for such a new departure. The missionary propaganda was in itself an innovation not directly enjoined upon the Jews in the Old Testament. But the Jews had come to believe that such a command lay at the very heart of Torah, and that it was an act pleasing to God. New methods had to be found and new ways explored in order to reach their goal.¹⁸⁴

6. Personal Solicitation

Abraham is represented in Rabbinic lore as the first missionary of the One God. The Rabbis enjoin their hearers to go and do likewise and "make the Lord thy God beloved among all creatures, even as Abraham thy father had done." For it is written: "And the souls which they had made in Haran."¹⁸⁵ This really means: "All the souls they had acquired in Haran."¹⁸⁶ This, in other words, means that Abraham converted them and brought them to rest under the wings of Shekinah. Hence, it may be known, that every one that brings a single soul beneath the wings of the Shekinah is considered as though he had created and fashioned this soul.¹⁸⁷

Abraham is still held to be the father of proselytes. Abraham was responsible for the male converts and Sarah for the female proselytes. Our father Abraham caused God's name to be invoked by all who passed by his home. How did he do it? He gave the wayfarers food and drink, and when they arose to thank him, he said: "Nay, you have partaken of God's gift. Give thanks to Him,

¹⁸⁴The Zodiac is regularly represented in Mithraism. We find it upon the walls of the Mithraeums and in sculptures used for adornment. The Seasons were adopted by Mithraism and personified and were closely related to the four winds. The Zodiacs and the personified seasons came into use in Mithraism in Asia Minor. These Mithraic signs were taken over by the Jews in their Synagogue-art. They are found in Mosaic floors in several Synagogues, probably best preserved in the Beth Alpha Synagogue. We have no indication that the Zodiacs and the Seasons were worshipped in Mithraism.

W. H. Roscher, Ausführliches Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie, p. 1897.

Gressmann, Die Orientalischen Religionen, p. 149.

Cumont, The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. 38.

¹⁸⁵Gen. 12:5.

¹⁸⁶William G. Braude, Jewish Proselyting in the First Five Centuries, p. 27.

¹⁸⁷Canticles Rabbah on 1:3.

praise and bless Him, who spake and the world was."¹⁸⁸

Moses is said to have made a proselyte of his father-in-law. He plead with him, saying: "Come with us and we will deal kindly with you" for God told Israel to deal kindly with proselytes.¹⁸⁹ The Rabbis set before their hearers examples of proselyting by their revered men of old. This was done with a purpose, namely to inspire the same zeal in their hearers that they might go out and do as Abraham and Moses did. Braude says: "Yeshibat or seminaries may have been founded in the larger centers not only to spread learning in Israel but also to propagate principles of Judaism amongst the Gentiles."¹⁹⁰ Orally and by pen the Israelites were educated to do personal work for their God amongst the Gentiles.

The personal solicitation done by three men to win the royal house of Adiabene is a classical example and highly instructive. A Jewish merchant by the name of Ananias traded with the princesses of the court with such success that he converted them to the Jewish faith. He must have been highly respected and given special privileges, being thus allowed freely to converse with the royal princesses in the palace. Ananias finally won the Prince Izates. A traveling Jew by the name of Eleazar came from Galilee. He led Izates to accept the law fully and be circumcised. Izates' mother, Queen Helena, through the influence of a third proselytizer, was also won over and became a devoted follower of Judaism.¹⁹¹ Friedländer is certain that Ananias was a Diaspora Jew and that Eleazar was a Pharisee.¹⁹² Ananias does not urge Izates to be circumcised. Even when Izates himself suggests it, Ananias is somewhat fearful of the consequences. Ananias tries to persuade him that such a step was not necessary, that he could serve God without being circumcised. Sincere worship is the essential thing. Ananias re-echoes Paul's words:

¹⁸⁸ Talmud Babli, tractati sota, 10 b; of. Gerald Friedlander, Rabbinic Philosophy and Ethics (London: P. Vallentine and Sons, 1912), p. 58.

¹⁸⁹ Pseudo-Jonathan on Numbers 10:29.

¹⁹⁰ William G. Braude, Jewish Proselyting, etc., p. 18.

¹⁹¹ Josephus ant. 20:2, 3, 5; 4:3.

¹⁹² Friedländer, Die Religiösen Bewegungen innerhalb des Judentums im Zeitalter Jesu, 1905, .p. 33.

"Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but the important thing is the keeping of the commandments of God."¹⁹³ To Eleazar circumcision was essential to true conversion; he was of the legalistic type. Here we have the two forms of proselyting in Judaism, analogous to what we find in early Christianity. Both types seem to have been equally in earnest and scored considerable success. It is difficult to say how far Eleazar represented the Palestinian viewpoint, and Ananias the Diaspora. It is more likely that these types were represented both in Diaspora and in Palestine.

We have already referred to the fact that Abraham is said to have won proselytes by deeds of hospitality and kindness. In the book of Tobit we have mention of a second tithe paid "unto orphans and the widows and the proselytes who attached themselves to the children of Israel."¹⁹⁴ By persuasive words, kind deeds, and righteous living, the Jews sought to convert the Gentiles to the God of Israel.

¹⁹³I Cor. 7:19.

¹⁹⁴Tobit 1:8.

